

The Times of India, 1 July 2006

Indo-US N-deal: US to address remaining issues in bill

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration has said a bill to implement the historic Indo-US civilian nuclear deal that has been cleared by two key congressional panels has to go through "some more work" and pledged to work with the Congress to address "remaining issues" but "without reopening the whole process". The administration has expressed confidence that when the full process is out of the way in the Congress the legislation will be "something" that everybody can support as being in the interests of the US and India. "The House International Relations Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee have approved a bill seeking to make exemptions in American energy laws to enable civilian nuclear cooperation between India and US. "...What we've seen is a strong and positive reception to date. Both committees have worked hard on this legislation and we certainly appreciate that and value the partnership and cooperation that we've enjoyed with them so far," he said. "The legislation will now be considered by the full House and the full Senate. We will continue to work with Congress, as we have in the past, to address remaining issues in the legislation, in the bill" Erelei said. He said the bill "has to go through some more work but we are confident that (it) will be a cooperative and a good process and it will end up with something that everybody can support and that serves the interests of the United States and our strong partner India" Erelei said.

Daily Times, 1 July 2006

UK could scale back N-arsenal

LONDON: Britain could scale back its nuclear arsenal now that the Cold War is over, lawmakers concluded on Friday in a report that will set the tone for months of debate over the fate of Britain's nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Tony Blair has said he will decide later this year whether or how to replace the fleet of Trident missile-carrying submarines that form Britain's nuclear arsenal. The issue has stirred up debate within Blair's left-leaning Labour Party. Finance Minister Gordon Brown, Blair's presumed successor, last week signalled his backing for replacing Trident, angering some Labour lawmakers who believe Britain should give up nuclear arms. Parliament's Defence Committee suggested the size of the arsenal - submarine-launched ballistic missiles carried on four Vanguard-class submarines - could be reduced since it may not be necessary to maintain one submarine always at sea. Under the current Continuous-at-Sea Deterrent cycle, one Trident-armed submarine is constantly in service and ready to fire, a system designed to avoid alarming other nations if a submarine sets sail at a time of crisis. Britain could maintain a smaller fleet of missiles if it abandoned CASD, the committee suggested, or move to a ship-, air- or land-based missile system.

The Asahi Shimbun, 1 July 2006

Koizumi, Bush give message to North

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President George W. Bush, in likely their last summit together, agreed Thursday to send a "clear message" to Pyongyang about the abduction, nuclear and missile issues. Bush said North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has an obligation to explain his intentions to the international community concerning a Taepodong 2 ballistic missile being prepared for launch. "Launching the missile is unacceptable," Bush said in a joint news conference after the meeting. Koizumi said that he and Bush discussed "various measures of pressure" if North Korea fires the missile. "In the first place, we should try and approach North Korea not to launch the Taepodong 2 missile," Koizumi said. The summit was the last occasion for the two leaders to show off their friendly relationship. Koizumi will step down in September. Koizumi and Bush hailed the ties between the two countries and said they will promote the Japan-U.S. alliance based on mutual values and interests. Bush told reporters, "Japan and the United States will be able to work even closer together in the 21st century." Koizumi said that he and Bush confirmed Japan-U.S. cooperation on a number of issues. "No country in the world has an important bilateral relationship that is equivalent to the Japan-U.S. relationship," Koizumi said. But the focus often returned to North Korea.

The Korean Herald, 1 July 2006

Missile test may bring end to nuke talks: Hill

A long-range missile test by North Korea would call into question commitments by the U.S. and other countries to give security guarantees and aid in return for North Korea ending its nuclear program, a U.S. government official said. Christopher Hill, an assistant secretary of state and the top U.S. negotiator in six-nation nuclear talks with North Korea, called on the country to return to the discussions and said preparations for a launch are damaging prospects for an agreement. "While a launch would raise questions about the future of the six-party talks, I want to also be very clear that we are prepared to - we continue to be prepared to return to those talks without

preconditions," Hill said Thursday in testimony at the House of Representatives, according to a transcript. He also said visiting North Korea while the communist state appears ready to test-fire a long-range missile would be "problematic." "It is a little problematic to be invited to Pyongyang at a time when they are aiming a missile," Hill told lawmakers who had urged him to take up an invitation to visit North Korea in order to restart stalled nuclear talks. "Fundamentally, the question I have is 'are they serious about getting this done,'" Hill told the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House of Representatives International Relations Committee.

The Hindu, 1 July 2006

Ukraine sold missiles to China, Iran: Russia

MOSCOW: Ukraine sold banned long-range missiles to China and Iran in a gross breach of its non-proliferation obligations, the Russian defence chief has said. Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said Ukraine's state-owned defence exporter through its subsidiary supplied 12 nuclear-capable cruise missiles to China and Iran. Mr. Ivanov, who is also a Deputy Prime Minister, told a news conference here on Friday that Progress, a daughter firm of Ukraine's arms export monopoly Ukrspetseksport, in 2000-2001 sold six Soviet Kh-55 Granat missiles to China and another six missiles to Iran. "This is the grossest violation of the missile technologies control regime," Mr. Ivanov said at a presentation of a Russian White Book on proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Russian Minister said this was the sole violation of the non-proliferation regime in the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States. International authorities had been informed of the Ukrainian deal and investigation was underway, he said. Ukrainian officials earlier said the missiles had been sold without nuclear warheads. Out of 1000 Granat missiles Ukraine inherited from the Soviet Union, half were to be sold back to Russia and half were to be destroyed.

Hindustan Times, 2 July 2006

India-US nuclear deal to stay on course despite issues

Washington, July 1: The US is confident that a few remaining legislative issues relating to the India-US nuclear deal will be resolved without the whole process being reopened or the road map outlined by President George W Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh being changed. Even as the Bush Administration is mighty pleased with the strong bipartisan support the deal received from two key panels of the US Congress, State Department Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli indicated Friday that a few issues still remained to be addressed. "There are a couple of remaining issues to be addressed. Discussions are ongoing. I'm not in a position to really get into any detail," he said. "But, as I said, the package we have before us is what we're working on and we think it'll -- and we're confident that it will end up positive and end up fulfilling the vision of President Bush and Prime Minister (Manmohan Singh) of India, consistent with the statements they made in July 2005 and March 2006," Ereli said. "Obviously it has to go through some more work, but we're confident that it will be a cooperative and a good process and it will end up with something that everybody can support and that serves the interests of the United States and our strong partner," he said.

Dawn, 2 July 2006

Enrichment to continue: Ahmadinejad

TEHRAN, July 1: Iran's hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Tehran will continue its uranium enrichment program despite international calls to halt the sensitive project, state television reported on Saturday. "The Iranian government and the people have decided, and without any doubt with dignity and glory we will pass this phase," Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying from Gambia after explaining Iran's fuel cycle programme to Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo. Ahmadinejad is in Gambia to address the African Union summit. World powers gave Iran one more week on Thursday to provide a response to an international proposal on suspending uranium enrichment, but Tehran immediately rejected the deadline.

The Tribune, 3 July 2006

Top scientist prefers NPT to Indo-US N-deal

Mumbai, July 2: "India will be better off signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which permits the exit of any signatory nation, rather than the nuclear deal with the US that will bind the country for perpetuity", top nuclear scientist Homi Sethna has said. "NPT may be discriminatory, but we will still be allowed to exit whereas in the Indo-US deal which is under negotiation, India will remain bound in perpetuity," Sethna said while delivering a keynote address at the Forum of Integrated National Security (FINS) here last evening. "Therefore, I prefer NPT to signing the current deal (with the US)," said Sethna, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. "India is supposed to get only uranium for expanding its nuclear programme. Simply for this, so much compromising is

uncalled for," he said. "The Americans were out of the nuclear power reactor building business for the last 25 years. So where is the question of getting technology from them", asked the octogenarian scientist who is credited with playing a key role in the 1974 nuclear blast that saw India's emergence as a nuclear weapons power. Asked whether it would be unethical on India's part to sign a deal with the US, he denied that this was the case, pointing to India's need for energy security.

The Hindu, 3 July 2006

Experts express concern over nuclear deal with U.S.

MUMBAI: Defence analysts and nuclear scientists on Sunday expressed concern over the India-United States nuclear deal. They said the Centre still had time to "rethink" it. At a seminar on "Nuclear India-Technological and strategic relevance," organised by the Forum of Integrated National Security (FINS), they said the Government was not paying sufficient attention to the "pitfalls and weaknesses" in the deal. Defence analyst Bharat Karnard said: "The kind of things mentioned in the preamble of the deal has all things like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Iran issue, which we cannot ignore." P.K. Iyengar, former Atomic Energy Commission Chairman, said: "It is now obvious that in spite of the exemptions to be approved by the U.S. Congress, the American President will have to certify every year, in detail, that he is satisfied with the behaviour and programmes of India in the nuclear field, especially with respect to the augmentation of the nuclear arsenal." The U.S. President would also be certifying that no benefit was derived by the Indian strategic programme from external assistance - from the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. "This is a very dangerous proposition ... any such certification will be highly subjective and can result in disagreements in the future." Mr. Iyengar said the additions to the agreement of July 18, 2005 would, in effect, cap India's strategic programme for a minimum credible deterrent.

The Times of India, 3 July 2006

Win-Win Nuclear Deal

It is futile to look for explanations from prophets of gloom who predicted that the Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreement would fail to overcome US legislative hurdles. The Bills cleared the House and senate committees with majorities of 37 to five and 16 to two, respectively. There was overwhelming bipartisan support for the deal in both Houses of the Congress. This was contrary to expectations - with falling poll ratings of President Bush, Democrats are expected to capture the Congress in November, which would put an end to the nuclear honeymoon. The Americans have a strategy to ensure that they remain the foremost power in military, economic, technological and cultural terms, in a group of six major powers. The six powers are US, China, European Union (EU), Japan, Russia and India. In order to implement this strategy they have to enlist India as a partner as they have already done the other four powers. China is far from being an adversary of the US. It has an over \$200 billion annual trade deficit with US, has invested \$250 billion in US bonds and banks, and is a partner with US in a number of international economic and technological arrangements. The thrust of US strategy towards China is engagement, not containment. China is as capitalist as the US, so it is rather unlike the US relationship with the Soviet Union during the Cold War years.

The Tribune, 3 July 2006

Iran rejects deadline for N-response

Tehran, July 2: Iran again rejected a deadline today to respond to an international offer aimed at resolving a nuclear standoff, saying it would answer during the next Iranian month which begins July 23. "A deadline is not an issue. We think such statements are not constructive and they will not help resolving the problem. We will respond next month," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters. World powers on Thursday gave Iran one more week to provide a "clear and substantive response" to an international proposal over the crisis. The five permanent UN Security Council members - the UK, China, France, Russia and the USA, plus Germany have offered Iran a package of incentives that includes multilateral talks if it agrees to temporarily halt uranium enrichment. That work is at the centre of fears the hardline regime could acquire nuclear weapons, although Tehran insists the project aims only to provide fuel for nuclear energy. Rejecting allegations that Iran was seeking to buy time, Asefi said: "It is not a question of tactics and wasting time. It is a multi-dimensional package and takes time to examine". He said several committees were studying the offer and that Iran would deliver its response 'sometime' after July 23.

The Telegraph, 3 July 2006

Coal barrier to nuclear plants falls

New Delhi, July 2: Changes in nuclear economics have fuelled a search for virgin sites for nuclear power plants across India and demolished a decades-old perception that nuclear plants are not viable near coal deposits. A site selection committee set up by the Department of Atomic Energy is now evaluating candidate sites offered by several states, including Bengal, Bihar and Haryana, senior Nuclear Power Corporation (NPC) officials said. "A number of sites are under technical evaluation to determine their suitability for accommodating nuclear power plants," an official said. The site evaluation is based on technical studies that examine issues such as seismicity, location of bedrock and availability of water required to run steam turbines for power generation, they said. But a site will also have to meet regulatory requirements that mandate a 1.5-km radius exclusion zone - an area girdling the nuclear plant where no human activity would be allowed. In addition, regulatory requirements also demand that there should be no large human population centre within a radius of 5 km. "Within this 5-km radius zone there should not be any future growth in human habitation," an expert in the nuclear power community told The Telegraph.

Daily Times, 3 July 2006

Iran denies cruise missile purchase from Ukraine

TEHRAN: Iran on Sunday denied purchasing cruise missiles from Ukraine after Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said a Ukrainian firm had delivered half a dozen to the Islamic republic. "I am surprised by the comments made by Mr Ivanov. No, we did not have any purchase of illegal weapons, and we did not purchase such missiles," Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said. Asefi added, "Even the Ukrainians have denied it." On Friday Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said a Ukrainian firm had delivered 'six X-55 cruise missiles to China and another six to Iran in 2000 and 2001.' "This is a most flagrant violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) of which Ukraine is a member," Ivanov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies. Ukraine denounced the comments as an attempt "to create an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust in Ukraine, especially on the eve of a G8 meeting in Russia." The Group of Eight - Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States, are to hold a summit in Saint Petersburg July 15 to 17. The X-55 is an air-to-surface cruise missile designed for strategic bombers that can be outfitted with a nuclear warhead and can have a range of up to 2,500 kilometres. However, the 12 missiles in question did not leave Ukrainian territory with warheads, a Ukrainian investigation found.

The Indian Express, 4 July 2006

India signs pacts with Spain, seeks support in NSG for N-deal

New Delhi, July 3: India today sought the support of Spain, a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), for the Indo-US nuclear deal as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met his Spanish counterpart Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero here. Singh also invited Spanish investment in various sectors, including infrastructure, automobiles and renewable energy, a suggestion to which Zapatero responded positively. Sources said the Indo-US nuclear deal came up during the talks between the two leaders and Singh sought Spain's support in this regard. Spain is a member of the 45-nation NSG where India is required, under the Indo-US nuclear deal, to evolve consensus to allow the international community to have trade with it in the atomic field. The two sides also signed three pacts, including Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty on Criminal Matters, after about 90-minute meeting between Singh and Zapatero, which covered a host of issues, particularly focussing on enhancing cooperation in economic and political field.

The Indian Express, 4 July 2006

Iran has until July 12 to respond to West nuke offer

VIENNA, JULY 3: Western powers will reactivate efforts to punish Iran through possible UN Security Council sanctions unless it suspends uranium enrichment and agrees to talks on its nuclear programme by July 12, diplomats said on Monday. The envoys - some of them senior UN diplomats, and all familiar with details of the six-nation drive to persuade Iran to compromise on its nuclear activities - spoke just two days before a key Iran-European Union meeting in Brussels meant to make clear to the Iranians that their time is running out. On Wednesday, Senior EU envoy Javier Solana will urge top Iranian nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani to immediately commit his country to suspending enrichment and starting negotiations on the six-power package, the diplomats said. They also said Russia and China were closer than ever to supporting the West on UNSC action - including sanctions - if Tehran refuses the package of incentives meant to wean it off enrichment.

The Washington Post, 4 July 2006

N. Korea Warned on Missile Test

A senior U.S. official warned North Korea yesterday that it would be "profoundly unwise" to carry out reported plans to launch a long-range missile. In an escalation of diplomatic sparring over North Korean preparations to test a Taepodong-2 ballistic missile, Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns said "our strong advice obviously is for the North Koreans not to engage in any type of provocative activity." He and other U.S. officials urged Pyongyang to return to negotiations known as the six-party talks and to eliminate its nuclear weapons. "The reports we've seen that the North Koreans might be preparing a missile launch, that would be a profoundly unwise step by the North Koreans," Burns said in an interview for the C-SPAN program "The Newsmakers." If North Korea goes ahead with the launch, "the United States would respond appropriately, including by taking the necessary measures to protect ourselves," State Department spokesman Edgar Vasquez said.

The New York Times, 4 July 2006

N. Korea Vows Nuke Response to U.S. Attack

SEOUL: North Korea vowed on Monday to respond with an "annihilating" nuclear strike if its atomic facilities are attacked pre-emptively by the United States. The Bush administration responded sternly, saying while it had no intention of attacking, it was determined to protect the United States if North Korea launched a long-range missile. "Should North Korea take the provocative action of launching a missile the U.S. would respond appropriately, including by taking the necessary measures to protect ourselves," State Department spokeswoman Julie Reside said. Still, Reside said, the United States and other countries that have negotiated with North Korea are seeking a fundamentally different relationship with the reclusive regime. She said that relationship must be based on the complete and verifiable elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons and nuclear program. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns warned North Korea against firing the missile and urged the communist country to return to six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

Dawn, 4 July 2006

Defence being made invincible: Musharraf

DIAMER, July 3: President General Pervez Musharraf on Monday said that work on a 15 years comprehensive plan was under way to make the country's defence impregnable, adding that the enemy would not cast the evil eye on Pakistan. "Work on 15 years comprehensive plan is under progress to make country's defence invincible. After the completion of the plan, the enemy will not dare to cast evil eye on Pakistan," said the president while addressing the union darbar of Northern Light Infantry Regiment at Boonji. "Pakistan is not facing any external threat. We guarantee solidarity, security and strong defence of the country and strong defence in this era of ours is extremely imperative. Under the 15 years plan, armed forces will be modernised and will be equipped with modern and sophisticated weaponry," he said. "We have to defeat terrorism. There is no external threat but we have to tame internal militancy," he said.

The Washington Post, 5 July 2006

N. Korea Test-Fires Long-Range Missile

North Korea test-fired at least six missiles yesterday, including its long-range Taepodong-2, senior U.S. officials said, defying strong warnings from the United States and regional powers in Asia. The controversial long-range missile failed less than a minute after launch, falling into the Sea of Japan, along with the other, less-sophisticated missiles. Diplomatic and military officials played down any imminent threat, but Stephen J. Hadley, President Bush's national security adviser, called the display of firepower on the Fourth of July "provocative behavior." In addition to prompting swift condemnation in Washington and Japan, the launches set off a flurry of diplomatic consultations. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice began calling Asian capitals that were waking to the news, and the U.N. Security Council was set to take up the matter today. Meanwhile, a special U.S. envoy, Christopher R. Hill, was dispatched to consult with allies. Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso said Tokyo was likely to impose economic sanctions against North Korea in response to the missile tests; Japanese authorities said they would begin by banning North Korean ships from Japanese ports for six months or more. In Pyongyang, an official from North Korea's communist government met with Japanese reporters and acknowledged the missile launches.

The Hindu, 5 July 2006

UNSC to discuss N.Korea missile tests

United Nations: United Nations Security Council will discuss today the situation emerging out of North Korea's test-firing of missiles, including one that is capable of reaching the US mainland. Japan has requested for a discussion on the issue at the UNSC, after Pyongyang test-launched six missiles including a long-range Taepodong-2 that is believed to be capable of reaching the US. French Ambassador, Jean-Marc de la Sabliere, who is the

president of the 15-member Council for this month, said in a statement Tuesday that he was taking "all necessary steps for this meeting to take place, first thing in the morning." No immediate comment was available from United Nations officials and diplomats on the test-firing as the world body's headquarters was closed yesterday because of American independence day. US Ambassador to UN, John Bolton, was consulting with his members of the Security Council on a possible response to the crisis.

The Asahi Shimbun, 5 July 2006

Japan plans sanctions against North Korea over missile launches

Japan was discussing "all sanctions possible" against North Korea in response to Pyongyang's series of missile launches, including the long-range Taepodong 2, that all landed in the Sea of Japan. The government said North Korea fired six missiles early Wednesday that landed near Russian territory, several hundreds of kilometers from the Japanese coast. The short flights indicate that the test of the Taepodong 2, believed capable of hitting the U.S. mainland, was a failure. Tokyo and Washington had warned North Korea against launching the Taepodong 2 ballistic missile, which had been set up on a launch pad in mid-June. Tokyo was scrambling to come up with countermeasures Wednesday, including calling on the United Nations Security Council to discuss the matter, the officials said. The Japanese government already decided to ban entry of North Korean vessels to Japanese ports, including the Man Gyong Bong-92 cargo ferry, for six months. The ferry was forced to anchor about 3 kilometers offshore of Niigata port on Wednesday. "From the standpoint of matters concerning the security of Japan and peace and stability in the international community, on top of the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it is an extremely serious issue," Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe told a news conference at 8:20 a.m. after a meeting of the Security Council of Japan.

The New York Times, 5 July 2006

North Korea's Folly

Americans can take some comfort from the reported failure of a long-range missile test by North Korea. Pyongyang is apparently still a good way from mastering the intercontinental ballistic missile technology that might one day allow it to threaten the United States. But the other message from the missile tests is considerably less reassuring. North Korea has again shown itself to be a dangerous rogue actor, ignoring the almost universal pleas from other countries to refrain from a test that can only add to regional tensions and multiply doubts about its trustworthiness and intentions. The goal of negotiating an end to North Korea's long-range missile and nuclear weapons programs is one that, in principle, all concerned countries have agreed to. North Korea's reckless and unilateral decision to proceed with a missile test now can only make it harder to achieve that goal any time soon. Since the test poses no direct security threat, and violates no international treaty, there is no justification for any military response, by the United States or anyone else. Everyone's long-term interest lies in reanimating the diplomacy that has sputtered to a halt over an unrelated banking dispute. The Bush administration should have moved many months ago to overcome that obstacle. But now it is North Korea that has clearly put itself in the wrong. Washington should obviously not reward that bad faith by abruptly rushing back to the bargaining table. But reviving those talks in a more considered way would serve America's own best interests.

The Indian Express, 5 July 2006

Russia, China urge Iran to accept N-package before deadline

MOSCOW/BEIJING: Russia and China separately urged Iran on Tuesday to respond quickly to a package of incentives to wean Tehran off its nuclear programme. "We would really like our Iranian partners to accept the proposals," said Russian President Vladimir Putin, referring to a package put forward by the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. He added that he would like talks to start before next week's Group of Eight industrialised nations summit in Russia, but thought this was unlikely. "We hope Iran can respond to the package at an early date," said Jiang Yu, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, at a regular briefing. "The Iranian issue is at an important stage and the urgent task is to help resume the talks as soon as possible."

Deccan Herald, 5 July 2006

Hitting Iran N-assets futile, Bush told

Washington: "A crucial issue in the military's dissent, the officers said, is the fact that American and European intelligence agencies have not found specific evidence of clandestine activities or hidden facilities: the war planners are not sure what to hit," US defence analysts have told President Bush that attacking Iran's nuclear facilities is unlikely to destroy Tehran's nuclear programme. According to the prestigious New Yorker magazine, senior defence officials have also warned how an attack that is launched if diplomatic efforts fail to resolve the prevailing

crisis over Iran's nuclear research could result in 'serious economic, political, and military consequences for the United States'. "A crucial issue in the military's dissent, the officers said, is the fact that American and European intelligence agencies have not found specific evidence of clandestine activities or hidden facilities: the war planners are not sure what to hit," according to the magazine's report. How the Bush administration deals with Iran is of crucial importance to India because some US Congressmen have tried to tie the pending nuclear deal on Delhi's willingness to join in with Washington's efforts to contain Iran. A high ranking but unidentified US general is quoted by the New Yorker as saying that Washington's approach to Iran has been affected by its earlier experience of Iraq where the war continues and where no weapons of mass destruction were ever found.

Daily Times, 5 July 2006

'French warning of nuclear response a necessary deterrent'

STRASBOURG: Defence Minister Michele Alliot-Marie said Tuesday the warning by President Jacques Chirac that France could respond with nuclear weapons to state-sponsored terrorism was a necessary deterrent to protect the country from an attack. Chirac warned in January that leaders who would envisage using arms of mass destruction would expose themselves to a 'fitting' response - conventional or other - from France. He said there should be no doubt about France's will and capacity to use nuclear arms if its vital interests were threatened. Alliot-Marie suggested that France would extend its nuclear protection to European allies. "France is a nuclear power. We have indicated we are willing to strike if one of our neighbors' existence was threatened. It's a deterrent, but of course you must be willing to use it for it to be a deterrent," Alliot-Marie told a European Parliament committee. "Nuclear protection is our protection, the protection we prefer today," she said. Chirac drew scorching criticism in Europe for his comments, which had sent a warning to countries like Iran and sought to nip in the bud domestic debate about whether deeply indebted France still needs its expensive nuclear deterrent in the post-Cold War world. France's nuclear arsenal is considered a purely dissuasive means and is not intended for a normal battle situation.

The Times of India, 6 July 2006

'Pervez almost nuked India'

LONDON: The Pakistani army, led by General Pervez Musharraf, had moved nuclear warheads during the Kargil war so that they could be used against India, exiled former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has claimed in his official biography. "During my post-Kargil misadventure meeting with American president (Bill) Clinton, I was told by the American leader that nuclear warheads had been shifted from one station to the other during the Kargil war. I was taken aback by this revelation because I knew nothing about it." In his biography titled Gadaar kaun? Nawaz Sharif ki kahani, unki zubani (Who is the traitor? Nawaz Sharif's story in his own words), the former PM is quoted as saying: "The American president further told me during the meeting that the nuclear warheads have been moved so that these could be used against India. "I was asked by Clinton as to why I was unaware of these developments despite being the elected chief executive and the prime minister of the country. It was a very irresponsible thing to do on General Musharraf's part." The 500-page book, which is based on the personal and political life of Sharif, who is in London, has been written by senior Pakistani journalist Suhail Warraich and was released in Lahore on Tuesday.

The Indian Express, 6 July 2006

Pak may allow foreign firms to invest in its nuclear plants

Islamabad, July 5: In a bid to get a civilian nuclear deal from the US, Pakistan has said it was ready to permit foreign companies to invest in atomic power plants in the country and take back the unspent fuel to allay fears over proliferation. "There is no case for not giving this nuclear technology to Pakistan," said Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri, who is on a visit to the US and France. "Just give us the energy," he added. In an interview on Tuesday to state-run PTV before his departure, Kasuri said he would "press" the leaders of the US and France to rethink their stand on their persistent refusal to reach a pact with Pakistan similar to the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal. Kasuri said, "We are a declared nuclear power. Wherever I go, whether US or Europe, I will press our case." He maintained that "no harm" would be done to global counter-proliferation efforts if Pakistan got civilian nuclear technology. Pakistan officials said Kasuri's meeting in Washington are the follow-up to the bilateral cooperation agenda chalked up by Islamabad and Washington during President George W Bush's visit to Pakistan in March.

The Times of India, 6 July 2006

Pak Opposition may boycott nuke briefing

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's opposition parliamentarians, who have been invited for the first-ever briefing by the military on issues related to the country's nuclear programme, are mulling a boycott to protest the army's

"interference" in politics and governance. Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which include several opposition party members, have been invited to the Joint Chiefs of Staff Headquarters for a briefing to be held on July 7. The opposition party members, however, are considering whether to boycott it. Opposition members in the past have declined to visit GHQ citing "political interference in the country's affairs by army," Daily Times reported. Opposition senators Rukhsana Zuberi, Mehtab Ahmed Abbasi and Prof Khursheed Ahmed and former senator Farhatullah Babar have previously avoided visiting GHQ for briefings. They feel the parliament is the supreme body and it is the army that should be appearing before elected representatives to give briefings. However, this time the Opposition senators might well attend because the briefing is at JCSHQ and not at GHQ, and the briefing is on a particularly sensitive topic, it said.

Hindustan Times, 6 July 2006

Sharif confession | Malik debunks N-claim

New Delhi, July 5: day after the launch of former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif's biography in which he claimed that Pervez Musharraf, as Pakistan army chief, had moved nuclear warheads for use against India during the 1999 Kargil war, General (retd) P Malik has disclaimed it. Malik, who was the chief of Indian army during the war, told the Hindustan Times on Wednesday that there was hardly any substance in Sharif's rhetoric. "We had no information about the deployment of any nuclear weapons," Malik said. Sharif's first official biography, Ghadaar Kaun? Nawaz Sharif ki Kahani, Unki Zubani, reiterates his assertions that he was flabbergasted when the then US president Bill Clinton told him at a post-Kargil meeting that nuclear warheads had been shifted from one station to another. Malik said, "Nawaz Sharif's claims seem to be based on observations made by Clinton. It is highly debatable whether the then US president confronted Sharif with information garnered by the US intelligence or he was merely trying to arm-twist the PM." He said had Clinton felt Kargil could become a nuclear flashpoint, he would have discussed the volatility of the situation with the Indian leadership.

The Indian Express, 6 July 2006

Backing the N-deal

Murli Manohar Joshi, the erstwhile MFM (Most favoured Minister) of the Sangh Parivar, is clearly out of sync with the RSS on the contentious Indo-US nuclear deal. He has repeatedly described the deal as a sell-out which emasculates India's nuclear options in both military and civil sectors and puts a cap on India's capacity to have a minimum nuclear deterrent. The editorial in the latest issue of the Organiser does not subscribe to that view. It says: "The deal has presented India with a new opportunity. The other option was to continue with its nuclear isolation and perpetually be in competition with Pakistan." Slamming the Communists for not appreciating the agreement, it points out that "if President George Bush, whose domestic ratings are touching rock bottom, makes the Indo-US nuclear deal as his most important foreign policy success and manages to get support even from skeptical Democrats, because they don't want to be seen as voting against India, it only proves India's growing clout as a world power. This should make India proud." Echoing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's favourite line, the editorial concludes, 'American companies and the NRIs lobbied hard with hostile Congressmen to make the deal possible. The bottom line is enlightened national interest.'

Hindustan Times, 6 July 2006

Nuke the doubts

The critics who have howled their disapproval of the Indo-US nuclear deal have been small but loud. They formed packs in both India and the US, they have included both right and left, war hawks and peaceniks. That they have emerged from the extremes is as good evidence as any that the deal is a win-win for India and the world. Here's a checklist of the main arguments against the deal - and why they're hogwash. Myth 1: The deal caps India's fissile material production. Elements in the BJP argue that the deal puts curbs on how much bomb-making fissile material India can make. The US non-proliferation lobby argues the deal places no curbs on fissile material production. They both can't be right. The truth is closer to the latter stance. The deal gives India the option of piling up fissile material: India can build as many military reactors as it wants and continue developing its breeder reactor. The latter, when completed, would leave the country knee-deep in plutonium. The non-proliferation crowd is wrong to say India will go fissile crazy. There may be a way, but there's no will. India didn't make a plutonium mountain before the deal - though it could have - because New Delhi has no interest in a mega-arsenal. Reasons: An emptied exchequer and an arms race with China. Bottomline: The deal doesn't restrict India's fissile material production, India's own strategic calculations do.

The Times of India, 6 July 2006

N Korea missile tests suit India

NEW DELHI: The North Korean missile fireworks, which lit the sky over the Sea of Japan on Tuesday, have unexpectedly brought into sharp focus India's own North Korean missile problem - these same Nodongs and Taepodongs are regularly fired from their launch pads from Pakistan, albeit with Afghan names and to less international fanfare. For India, it's an opportunity to kill many birds with one stone. First, it makes a very good case for the Indian government to seriously consider missile defence. After identifying defence as a viable security alternative against Pakistan and China, and actually acquiring the Phalcon and Green Pine from Israel, India has let the matter slide for a missile defence system. Even though it was part of the NSSP talks with the US, India is yet to decide whether it wants the US Patriot 3 system, or the Israeli Arrow system ? or neither. Second, India should quietly relish the US and Japanese discomfiture - since these were the first missile tests by North Korea after 1998, it should be a kind of security awakening for Japan, highlighting more clearly the importance and dangers of missile proliferation.

The Hindu, 6 July 2006

U.N. holds emergency meet on North Korean missiles

"Russia expresses serious concern over these actions, which run counter to the expectations of the international community and its efforts to strengthen peace and stability in the region and could complicate the settlement of the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement issued on Wednesday. The North Korean ambassador in Moscow was summoned to the Foreign Ministry over the incident. Two of the missiles reportedly splashed down in the sea a few dozen kilometres from Russia's Far Eastern city of Nakhodka. "The launch has threatened shipping in the Pacific Ocean and violated common practices of advanced missile launch warning," the Russian statement said. Earlier, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry described the missile tests as a "provocation" which "seriously aggravates the situation around the Korean nuclear programme." The spokesman said Russia would "take a most active part" in the U.N. Security Council meeting called by Japan to discuss the Korean tests, but a senior Russian legislator said Moscow would not support sanctions against Pyongyang.

Hindustan Times, 6 July 2006

'N Korea's missiles can hit targets in Asia, not in US'

Washington: North Korea's missile tests suggested the country cannot directly threaten the United States - for now. But the Koreans can learn from mistakes, whether the tests were posturing, serious military efforts or both, US officials and military experts said. North Korea test-fired a seventh missile on Wednesday after it had defied international protests by launching a long-range missile and at least five shorter-range weapons. The long-range Taepodong-2 missile -- the object of intense international attention for more than a month -- failed 42 seconds after lift-off, suggesting a catastrophic failure of the rocket's first, or booster, stage. That heartened US officials, since an earlier version of the long-range missile -- last tested in 1998 -- failed later in its flight, apparently due to a third-stage malfunction. A working version of the intercontinental missile could potentially reach the United States with a light payload. "One thing we have learned is that the rocket didn't stay up for very long," President George W. Bush said. "It tumbled into the sea." Either way, the tests offered little new insight into North Korea's strength and intentions. They did generate widespread international alarm and propel the UN Security Council into an emergency session to consider a response.

The New York Times, 6 July 2006

U.S. Seeks Strong Measures to Warn the North Koreans

WASHINGTON, July 5: The Bush administration tried Wednesday to build international support for stronger measures, including sanctions, to persuade North Korea to abandon its weapons program after it fired a seventh missile into the Sea of Japan. But China and Russia resisted, saying they favored less punitive actions. "I strongly believe that it is much more effective to have more than one nation dealing with North Korea," President Bush said a few hours after the North followed its six-missile barrage of the previous day with a seventh missile launching. "I view this as an opportunity to remind the international community that we must work together to convince the North Korean leader that he must give up his weapons program," Mr. Bush added. The unsuccessful launching of a new missile called the Taepodong 2 on Wednesday in the face of repeated international warnings effectively scrapped a moratorium that North Korea had observed since 1998. A successful test of the long-range missile would have represented a significant expansion of North Korea's ability to make advanced weapons. Bush administration officials suggested that more tests might be on the way: Stephen J. Hadley, the president's national security adviser, said that the North had initially rolled about 10 missiles up to the launching pads, meaning that

maybe three or four more could be ready soon, though it was unclear what types they might be.

The New York Times, 6 July 2006

North Korea Vows More Missile Launches

SEOUL: North Korea on Thursday publicly acknowledged for the first time that it had tested missiles and vowed to continue launching them, threatening to "take stronger physical actions" against opponents of the tests. The North Korean Foreign Ministry made the comments in a statement one day after the country test-fired at least seven missiles, including an abortive launch of a long-range Taepodong-2. All of them apparently fell harmlessly into the Sea of Japan, but the launches drew international condemnation. "The successful missile launches were part of our military's regular military drills to strengthen self-defense," said the statement, carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency. "As a sovereign country, this is our legal right and we are not bound by any international law or bilateral or multilateral agreements," it said, echoing comments by Wednesday by a Foreign Ministry official. The ministry said the launches were unrelated to six-party talks aimed at persuading the country to abandon its nuclear program, and that Pyongyang was still committed to the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The New York Times, 6 July 2006

Few Good Choices in North Korean Standoff

The Bush administration has tried to ignore North Korea, then, reluctantly, to engage it, and then to squeeze its bankers in a manner intended to make the country's leader, Kim Jong Il, personally feel the pinch. President Bush has frequently expressed his dislike for Kim Jong Il and North Korea's government. Yet none of these steps in the past six years has worked. So now, after a barrage of missile launchings by North Korea, President Bush and his national security advisers found themselves on Wednesday facing what one close aide described as an array of "familiar bad choices." The choices have less to do with North Korea's newest missile - which, as Mr. Bush pointed out on Wednesday, "didn't stay up very long and tumbled into the sea" - than with the bigger question of whether the president is prepared to leave office in 2009 without constraining an unpredictable dictator who boasts about having a nuclear arsenal. "We're at the moment when the president has to decide whether he wants an unconstrained, nuclear North Korea to be part of his legacy," said Jonathan D. Pollack, a professor of Asian and Pacific studies at the United States Naval War College who has spent much of his career studying North Korea and its improbable strategies for survival.

Dawn, 6 July 2006

China and Russia oppose sanctions on N. Korea

UNITED NATIONS, July 5: China and Russia on Wednesday urged caution on the part of the UN Security Council in responding to North Korea's missile tests and indicated they would oppose the imposition of sanctions, as Japan pushed the world body for a strong resolution. China and Russia, while expressing deep regrets and concern over the North Korean tests, said they favoured a strong statement instead of a resolution. Japan called the emergency meeting after Pyongyang test-fired seven missiles on Wednesday - including a long-range Taepodong-2 capable of reaching US soil. Russian Ambassador Vitali Churkin told reporters that he favoured a strong council reaction, but opposed sanctions. He also urged the 15-member body to consider a presidential statement rather than a resolution. Japan drafted a resolution, backed by the United States, Britain and France, calling upon all member states to withhold all funds, goods and technology that could be used for North Korea's missile program. Japan's UN Ambassador Kenzo Oshima said he was confident there would be a "swift, strong and resolute" response by the international community to North Korea's firing of seven missiles. A visibly shaken Oshima said the firing of the missiles had brought the issue to a very serious level.

Dawn, 6 July 2006

Missile test by N. Korea cause for concern: PM

GENEVA, July 5: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Wednesday said Pakistan shared concerns over the nature of North Korean missile test as it believed in discouraging acts which created uncertainty and tension in any part of the world. "We naturally share the concern on the nature of this test," he said while responding to a question during an interaction with the local and foreign media at the end of his visit to Geneva, where he attended the United Nations Economic and Social Council and a UN panel meeting. Prime Minister Aziz said Pakistan believed in peace and discouraging acts which create uncertainty and tension in any part of the world. He asked all the stakeholders involved to be driven by the principles while responding to the missile tests. Responding to a question about scientist Dr A.Q. Khan, he said the government did not have any further information on the issue. Whatever

information it had on his activities had been shared with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The prime minister said Pakistan had a strong command and control regime besides an exports restraint regime that did not allow sharing nuclear technology.

The Asahi Shimbun, 6 July 2006

Japan slapping sanctions on Pyongyang

Japan is taking retaliatory measures against North Korea, starting with nine sanctions, for its series of missile tests Wednesday that all landed in the Sea of Japan near Russia. "We are considering all possible means of sanctions that Japan is capable of imposing," Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe told a morning news conference. The nine measures include a six-month embargo on port calls in Japan by the North Korean vessel Man Gyong Bong-92, which ferries passengers and goods between Niigata and North Korea. Since Japan and North Korea have no diplomatic ties, the Man Gyong Bong-92 is the only regular direct passenger route between the two nations. The government also banned entry into Japan of North Korean government officials and to ground chartered flights between Japan and North Korea. In addition, Tokyo is asking the Japanese public to "refrain" from traveling to North Korea, while central government officials will postpone any planned trips to North Korea. Other measures include strict controls over export procedures involving items that could be used by North Korea for development in missiles and nuclear weapons, as well as severe action against any illegal activities committed by North Korea. But even after Japan announced these measures, North Korea launched its seventh missile.

Daily Yomiuri, 6 July 2006

N. Korea launches 7 missiles / Government considering all possible sanctions, action at UNSC

North Korea on Wednesday launched seven missiles--six in the morning and another in the evening--all of which landed minutes later in the Sea of Japan near Russian coastal areas. The Japanese government said one of the seven missiles was a Taepodong-2, with a range of 3,500-6,000 kilometers. Pyongyang said it fired the missiles. The government protested against the missile launches, saying the action was a serious violation of the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration of 2002, in which North Korea agreed to freeze missile launches. As a sanction, the government prohibited the Man Gyong Bong-92, a North Korean passenger-cargo ferry, from entering Japanese ports for six months starting Wednesday. The government will also consider limiting or suspending money transfers and trade with North Korea under the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe said at a press conference Wednesday evening. "We'll implement new sanctions depending on North Korea's attitude and the international community's will," Abe said. The U.N. Security Council began discussing North Korea's missile launches later Wednesday. Tokyo, Washington and London were to seek the adoption of a resolution censuring North Korea for the launches.

The Korean Herald, 6 July 2006

Allies watch for signs of additional test-firing

As allies watched for any additional missile testing by North Korea today, Seoul said that for the time being, the failure of the intercontinental missile launched on Wednesday appeared to be due to a technical anomaly. North Korea today released its first official acknowledgement of the missile test launch, calling it a "normal and successful military drill." "This successful missile launch was part of the military training by and large carried out by our military for the fortification of the self-defense power," said the statement by the North's Foreign Ministry released by the official mouthpiece Korea Central News Agency. The ministry said, "We will continue to carry out missile launch drills from now on ... If anyone is to criticize (the drill) and attempt to pressure us, we will be left with no choice but to take sterner physical action in a different form." The ministry added that the missile testing, however, was irrelevant to the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program. North Korea early Wednesday morning and in the afternoon test-fired a total of seven missiles, including the long-range Taepodong-2 that is believed to be able to reach parts of Alaska or Hawaii.

The Washington Post, 6 July 2006

North Korea's Provocation

North Korea's criminal dictatorship is nothing if not unsubtle. Its launching of at least seven missiles on the Fourth of July, including a long-range booster it had not tested since 1998, was baldly aimed at putting pressure on the Bush administration, which lately has been focused on making disarmament offers to Tehran rather than Pyongyang. Sure enough, within hours there were predictable calls in Washington for the administration to begin "bilateral talks" with the regime of Kim Jong Il, exactly as he must have hoped. The good news is that most of the world appears outraged rather than impressed by the latest North Korean stunt. The U.N. Security Council met

yesterday to consider a tough condemnatory resolution, including sanctions proposed by Japan, which has already announced its own punitive measures. Russia, South Korea and China, the other three participants in the stalled "six-party" talks on North Korea's nuclear program, all reacted critically. The long-range missile itself appeared to be a dud, which may ease concerns that Mr. Kim is close to acquiring the capacity to target the United States.

The Asian Age, 7 July 2006

A Deal of broken assurances

The Prime Minister and his senior advisers who negotiated the Indo-US nuclear deal, are surprisingly silent after the passage of the recent bills in the US Congress. The reason could only be one of the following two. First, it could be that the PM and his advisers had reached a consensus beforehand with the US side, on the contents of these bills. They are counting on getting the deal through a generally ambivalent Parliament, where the Left opposition may thunder for some days and then meekly go along. The second possibility is that the PM and his advisers are equally taken aback by the total reversal of earlier agreements by the US, based on which the PM had boldly given several binding assurances to the public and Parliament. In any case, the PM, the national security adviser, the foreign secretary, the chairman of the AEC, and the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission and their trusted deputies, who alone were involved in these secret negotiations, have some serious explanations to give in a hurry.

The Hindu, 7 July 2006

Assessing the nuclear balance sheet

When India signed a landmark agreement in July 2005 for "full civil nuclear cooperation" with the United States in exchange for a specific set of commitments, there were three sets of concerns that analysts on the Indian side raised. The first related to technology. Would the deal hamper India's indigenous three-stage plans in the civil nuclear field by increasing our import dependence and subjecting our reactors and research facilities to intrusive international inspections? The second set of concerns was linked to 'national security.' To the extent to which nuclear weapons - rightly or wrongly - have come to occupy a central position in the country's security calculus, would the deal weaken or cap the Indian nuclear weapons capability? Finally, there were political and strategic concerns. What hidden costs did the U.S. offer of nuclear cooperation bring with it? Was India running the risk of getting drawn into a web of alliances the U.S. is building in Asia, thereby compromising its own strategic autonomy? These questions - especially on the fast-breeder - were intensively debated in the past year and were perhaps a useful input into the difficult negotiations India and the U.S. had on the question of implementation. But with the deal now entering its final phases, it is useful to assess whether the three sets of concerns raised last year retain any validity.

The Hindu, 7 July 2006

India, IAEA to hold talks on Safeguards Agreement

New Delhi, July 7: India and the IAEA will hold negotiations here tomorrow on the proposed Safeguards Agreement which is required to be put in place to allow international community to resume nuclear trade with New Delhi. The Indian side will include officials from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). Under the Indo-US civil nuclear deal signed in March during the visit of President George W Bush here, New Delhi and the IAEA have to work out an 'India-specific Safeguards Agreement' for supervision of civilian nuclear facilities of this country. In the civil nuclear agreement, India has identified 14 of its 22 atomic reactors as civilian which will be covered under the IAEA safeguards agreement. International Committees of both US House of Representatives and Senate recently approved two bills providing for change of law that will end India's nuclear apartheid.

The Hindu, 7 July 2006

Jaswant: India knew about it

New Delhi: India had full information about Pakistani nuclear warhead movements during the Kargil war, the former External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, has said. "We had full information about it. Even the National Security Adviser to the then U.S. President gave this information to us in writing," Mr. Singh told Aaj Tak. His comments came in the wake of the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's claims in his biography that the Pakistani army led by General Pervez Musharraf moved nuclear warheads during the Kargil conflict. Mr. Singh said he had also mentioned about the Pakistani nuclear warhead movement in his own book, due for publication later this month. "The entire mechanism of governance in Pakistan was in disarray during and after the Kargil conflict. And in the process, great many things were happening. Various limbs of the Government in Pakistan were acting and they were accountable only to themselves," he said.

The Hindu, 7 July 2006

US, China discuss N Korea's missile tests

Beijing, July 7: The chief US negotiator on North Korea met China's foreign minister Friday to discuss Pyongyang's missile tests, amid stepped up efforts by the world powers to curb North's provocative behavior. The meeting between US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing came hours after their presidents spoke by phone and North Korea vowed to fire off more missiles. Hill met earlier Friday with his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei, Beijing's chief envoy to the nuclear talks. The American planned to head to Seoul later as part of a regional diplomatic push. As Hill was making his way to China Thursday, US President George W. Bush called President Hu Jintao and other world leaders, urging a coordinated response to North Korea, which test-fired seven missiles Wednesday. Hu, whose country is North Korea's staunchest ally, urged calm and restraint to alleviate tensions in the region. China, which provides oil and other economic assistance to North Korea, is seen as key to getting Pyongyang to stop its missile tests and resume long-stalled negotiations over its nuclear weapons programmes. The US has urged Beijing to exert maximum leverage on North Korea, though so far Chinese efforts have been largely limited to diplomatic appeals.

Reuters, 7 July 2006

N.Korea Demands Japan Lift Sanctions: Report

TOKYO: North Korea has demanded that Japan end sanctions it has imposed in reaction to Pyongyang's missile launches, threatening "stronger action" if Tokyo continues with the measures, Japanese media said on Friday. "Japan is translating its criticism against us into action," Kyodo news agency quoted Song Il-ho, North Korea's ambassador in charge of diplomatic normalisation talks with Japan, as telling Japanese reporters in Pyongyang. "This may force us to take stronger physical actions," as a response, he said. Asked what the steps may be, he said, "I leave that to your imagination," Kyodo reported. Japan banned a North Korean ferry from entering Japanese ports for six months as part of a package of initial sanctions following Pyongyang's launch of a series of missiles that landed in the Japan Sea on Wednesday. The ferry, the only regular direct link between Japan and North Korea, is an important conduit for carrying money to the isolated communist state. Tokyo and Washington are pushing for a U.N. Security Council resolution on North Korea, and Tokyo has also said it is considering further unilateral sanctions, including limiting cash remittances. "It is very unfortunate, and I feel indignant," Japan's top government spokesman told reporters on Friday, when asked about the comments.

The New York Times, 7 July 2006

What Does North Korea Want?

North Korea's July 4 fireworks display had a desperate quality to it, even by the standards of a regime that specializes in self-defeating provocation. Whatever the original purpose may have been, it took exactly 42 seconds for this spectacle to backfire as the first stage of the long-range Taepodong 2 missile exploded and fell harmlessly into the Pacific. It is a telling metaphor for a regime that hasn't had a successful initiative in two decades. Since mid-June the Taepodong had been sitting on its launching pad, a premonitory bird waiting to take wing - and hiding in plain sight. For half a century North Korea has known that anything above ground can be seen by American spy satellites; that's why the world's most remarkable garrison state has some 15,000 underground security sites. The missile was there for us to see. Why were the Taepodong and the handful of other smaller rockets fired on Tuesday? Probably because it seemed like apt payback for the timing of the Pentagon's warfare exercises in the Pacific, which the North Koreans have taken as an insult and which they have been hyperventilating about for weeks. The scope of the exercises certainly annoyed the North Koreans: eight nations, 19,000 American troops. But so, too, did the timing. The North Koreans claim that the maneuvers started on June 25 - the 56th anniversary of the day the Korean War began. (The Pentagon says that they started on June 26.)

The Asahi Shimbun, 7 July 2006

North Korea's missiles

North Korea went ahead and test-fired missiles in defiance of international opposition. It launched six missiles one after another from early dawn to morning Wednesday and another one in the evening. North Korea's actions are outrageous. The country broke its promise with Japan and others to freeze its missile launches and ignored protests by international society. We strongly object to Pyongyang's reckless and irresponsible behavior. North Korea fired three types of missiles--the short-range Scud, the intermediate-range Nodong and the long-range Taepodong-2. It was a virtual demonstration of all types of ballistic missiles that North Korea possesses. All of the missiles landed in the Sea of Japan near Russia. It appears North Korea conducted the tests to threaten foreign countries by showing that it owns weapons that can be used to attack. The Taepodong-2 ballistic missile, which is believed capable of

reaching Alaska, attracted attention. However, the U.S. government and others believe the missile failed immediately after launch. However, the entire Japanese archipelago is within the range of the Nodong missile. North Korea is believed to have deployed 200 of them. And the fact that the Nodong could be fitted with nuclear warheads adds to the gravity of the situation.

Daily Yomiuri, 7 July 2006

Pyongyang may be readying 2nd Taepodong-2

North Korea is showing signs that it might be preparing for the launch of a second Taepodong-2 missile, several government sources said Thursday. Both Japanese and U.S. spy satellites have spotted on several occasions a ballistic missile, believed to be a Taepodong-2, at a site near a launch facility in Musudanri, northeastern North Korea, according to the sources. The Taepodong-2 has a range of between 3,500 kilometers and 6,000 kilometers. The suspected Taepodong-2 has already been assembled, with a new booster and a Rodong intermediate-range ballistic missile, which has a 1,300-kilometer range, as the second stage. But there are no signs that the missile has been placed atop a launchpad--a fact that one government source believes is an indication the missile will not be ready to launch anytime soon. The Taepodong-2 that North Korea test-fired early Wednesday morning was launched from the same facility and landed in the Sea of Japan, about 500 kilometers north-northwest of Niigata Prefecture.

Reuters, 7 July 2006

Iran Keeps World Guessing on Nuclear Answer

BRUSSELS: Iran kept a frustrated world guessing about its response to proposals aimed at defusing a standoff over its nuclear program Thursday when Tehran's chief negotiator met the European Union's foreign policy chief. Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told reporters he would give a preliminary response next week to a package of economic, technological and political incentives designed to entice Iran to halt uranium enrichment. "We are serious about continuing negotiations and will start next Tuesday with talks," he told reporters on meeting EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana in Brussels. The two men are due to meet again next week. Pressed to say if he had brought with him an initial answer to the major powers' package, which Solana delivered to Tehran on June 6, Larijani said: "We will talk about it Tuesday." A U.S. official later told State Department reporters in an email that Larijani did not respond to the proposal during his meeting with Solana. U.N. nuclear watchdog head Mohamed ElBaradei earlier warned Iran the world was running out of patience because it had not replied to the proposals.

The Hindu, 8 July 2006

Agni-III flight trial tomorrow

HYDERABAD: The crucial maiden flight trial of Agni-III, India's long range, surface-to-surface missile, which has been put on hold for the past several months, will take place on July 9. According to sources in the Defence Research and Development Organisation here, arrangements for the launch of the ballistic missile have been completed on Wheeler Island, Orissa.

The Tribune, 8 July 2006

N. Korea at it again

BY test-firing a barrage of missiles on Wednesday, North Korea has demonstrated once again that it is least bothered about the world's concerns at its controversial nuclear and missile programme. Among the missiles it has tested is Taepodong-2, which has a range of 6000 km and can hit even the West Coast of the US. This is definitely a provocative act when the international community, including the US, has been stressing on a peaceful diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis. Even China, North Korea's closest ally, which has always been measured in its reaction to the latter's attempt to acquire nuclear weapons, has expressed its unhappiness at the alarming developments. From whatever the reactions that have come it is too clear that the North Koreans by firing a flurry of missiles have renewed tensions in the north-western Pacific, causing particular concern to the US, Japan, South Korea, Russia and China. Apparently, they are in touch with each other to find ways to deal with a nation which has chosen to go its own way by developing nuclear and missile capability not needed by it.

Deccan Herald, 8 July 2006

Testing times

North Korea's missile tests have triggered a crisis. Although the tests were not all successful - the testing of the Taepodong-2 long-range missile, believed to be capable of striking the US, was a failure as the missile crashed into

the Sea of Japan 40 seconds after it was launched - Pyongyang's decision to go ahead with the missile testing in defiance of international opinion is being seen as a confrontationist action. While the tests have been widely condemned, China's response has been rather low-key although Beijing was among the countries that had warned Pyongyang against testing the missiles. There are differences too in the way the regional powers and the US want to handle the crisis. Tokyo has reacted by prohibiting the docking of a ferry that shuttles between North Korea and Japan, and which is the main direct link between the two countries. Additional sanctions are in the pipeline. South Korea and China - Pyongyang's largest trading partners - intend to continue economic engagement with North Korea. Japan and the US are said to be considering UN Security Council sanctions but this is unlikely as China and Russia are opposed to sanctions on North Korea.

The New York Times, 8 July 2006

Bush Says U.S. May Have Been Able to Intercept North Korean Missile

CHICAGO, July 7: President Bush said Friday that he believed the nation's nascent missile defense system would have had a "reasonable chance" of shooting down a long-range missile launched by North Korea had it come close to the United States, and he said he was determined to use the United Nations to set "some red lines" for future behavior by the North Koreans. Mr. Bush said the launching of a prototype long-range missile that tumbled into the Sea of Japan showed why missile defenses were needed, but he acknowledged that the abilities of the unproven missile defense system based in Alaska and California were "modest," and he said it was "hard for me to give you a probability of success." "I think we had a reasonable chance of shooting it down; at least that's what the military commander has told me," he said at a news conference in Chicago. Although defensive sensors and missiles, while not fully tested, are theoretically available for use in an emergency, Pentagon officials have said there was little reason to think they would have been used this week, as the North Korean test missile was not thought to carry a live warhead.

The New York Times, 8 July 2006

China Fights Sanctions to Punish North Korea

UNITED NATIONS, July 7: Japan introduced a Security Council resolution on Friday calling for sanctions against North Korea for its missile test-firings, but China opposed the move, saying such action could disrupt diplomatic efforts under way in the region. A newscaster on the official North Korean KRT television reported a Foreign Ministry statement announcing that missiles had been fired. As the diplomacy unfolded, Christopher R. Hill, the top American negotiator with North Korea, was in Seoul, South Korea, trying to rally support in that region for a tough, unified response to the North's testing of seven missiles on Wednesday. Mr. Hill, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, met with Chinese officials, including Li Zhaoxing, the foreign minister, in Beijing before arriving in Seoul on Friday evening. China agreed that resuming the six-nation talks over North Korea's nuclear program was a priority, Mr. Hill said. But it did not appear that he had made progress in persuading the Chinese to endorse sanctions. At the United Nations, Kenzo Oshima, the Japanese ambassador, said he hoped for a vote as early as Saturday, but Jean-Marc de la Sablière, the ambassador of France, which is president of the Council, said that a date would be announced Monday. Britain, France and the United States are sponsors of the measure.

The Washington Post, 8 July 2006

Bush Rejects Solo Talks With North Korea

CHICAGO, July 7: President Bush on Friday defended his response to the budding crisis spawned by North Korea's missile tests, saying he will not "get caught in the trap of sitting alone with North Korea at the table." Bush said he will patiently wait for the other countries taking part in the six-party talks to speak with a single voice, urging North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program and refrain from further long-range missile tests -- a process that he acknowledged will take time. "The problem with diplomacy, it takes a while to get something done," Bush said. "If you're acting alone, you can move quickly. When you're rallying world opinion and trying to come up with the right language at the United Nations to send a clear signal, it takes a while." The United States is working with China, Russia, Japan and South Korea to urge North Korea to abandon its nuclear program. The White House has encouraged tough economic sanctions since Tuesday's launch of seven missiles, including one with the capacity to reach Alaska. But China and Russia have resisted sanctions, even as Pyongyang has threatened to move ahead with more tests. Bush's comments came during an unusual news conference here at the Museum of Science and Industry. With the exception of his foreign trips, Bush almost always holds news conferences at the White House. But Friday's event involved local reporters as well as the national news media who travel with him.

The Washington Post, 8 July 2006

Deterrence is Not a Dirty Word

North Korea's failed test launch of the long-range Taepo-Dong II missile on July 5 may show that North Korea is not yet able to strike the United States with ballistics, but Americans should not let down their guard just yet. This is unlikely to be the last North Korean attempt to launch such a missile and once their engineers figure out the problem, they will go back to the launching pad. No one knows how long this process will take, but it could be as little as a few months and North Korean engineers will want to save their jobs and more by fixing the problem quickly. This continued development of missiles should worry all Americans as over the past few years North Korea has acquired enough nuclear material to build a small arsenal of nuclear weapons and while they cannot yet miniaturize a nuclear warhead to fit on a long-range missile, they are clearly pursuing a system capable of holding American cities at risk of attack. Their success is only a matter of time unless Pyongyang can be convinced their course is futile. Over the long run, how can Americans be sure that some future "test" missile won't be fitted with a nuclear weapon and targeted on a US city? The short answer is they can't. But through a straightforward policy of deterrence we can eliminate any thought in North Korean minds that they can attack the United States and survive.

People's Daily, 8 July 2006

China, Russia call for diplomatic resolution

China and Russia on Friday called for diplomatic resolution regarding Pyongyang's missile launch crisis amid Japan's push for sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). China believes that instead of seeking sanctions against Pyongyang, the UN Security Council can best make a unanimous and firm response to DPRK's missile launch "through a presidential statement with strong messages", said Wang Guangya, Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Besides such strong messages, the UN Security Council, as the most important world organization, should take actions responsibly by taking into account all possible negative consequences that they might lead to, said Wang. "All actions taken by the Security Council, if we are going to take one, would be conducive to the diplomatic effort which is now underway," said the Chinese diplomat. Earlier, Russia's UN ambassador Vitaly Churkin said Russia had "serious concerns" over DPRK's actions. But he voiced Russia's opposition to sanctions, saying "in my mind we could consider the format of a presidential statement." He urged all parties to be "clear-headed" and keep in mind the need for talks to achieve a diplomatic solution. Japan presented a draft Security Council resolution on Friday that seeks sanctions against the DPRK.

The Asahi Shimbun, 8 July 2006

U.N. missile resolution

Japan has proposed a resolution to the United Nations Security Council calling for harsh condemnation of Wednesday's missile launches by North Korea and sanctions in the name of the international community. Japan is active in the Security Council as a nonpermanent member, and is also directly affected by North Korea's missiles and its possession of nuclear weapons. The government should be saluted for speaking up quickly about how the world should protest Pyongyang's actions. The message of the proposed resolution is clear. Launching the missiles is a threat to international peace, and such behavior must be halted and a freeze placed on all future tests. It is also calling for a quick return by North Korea to the six-party talks with South Korea, the United States, Russia, China and Japan concerning Pyongyang's nuclear development, a moratorium on all nuclear-related work, and a ban on transfers of money, commodities or technology to North Korea that could be used in missiles or nuclear development. The majority of the Security Council members are expected to support these demands. But China and Russia, which hold veto rights as permanent members, appear unwilling to sign on.

The Washington Post, 8 July 2006

U.S. and Russia to Enter Civilian Nuclear Pact

President Bush has decided to permit extensive U.S. civilian nuclear cooperation with Russia for the first time, administration officials said yesterday, reversing decades of bipartisan policy in a move that would be worth billions of dollars to Moscow but could provoke an uproar in Congress. Bush resisted such a move for years, insisting that Russia first stop building a nuclear power station for Iran near the Persian Gulf. But U.S. officials have shifted their view of Russia's collaboration with Iran and concluded that President Vladimir Putin has become a more constructive partner in trying to pressure Tehran to give up any aspirations for nuclear weapons. The president plans to announce his decision at a meeting with Putin in St. Petersburg next Saturday before the annual summit of leaders from the Group of Eight major industrialized nations, officials said. The statement to be released by the two presidents would agree to start negotiations for the formal agreement required under U.S. law before the United States can engage in civilian nuclear cooperation. In the administration's view, both sides would benefit. A

nuclear cooperation agreement would clear the way for Russia to import and store thousands of tons of spent nuclear fuel from U.S.-supplied reactors around the world, a lucrative business so far blocked by Washington. It could be used as an incentive to win more Russian cooperation on Iran. And it would be critical to Bush's plan to spread civilian nuclear energy to power-hungry countries because Russia would provide a place to send the used radioactive material.

The Asian Age, 8 July 2006

Misleading India on nuclear deal

It is not easy to fight the combined strength of the lobbyists for the United States in this country and the Prime Minister and the PMO. With vast resources at their disposal, it is easy for them to turn night into day and vice versa. Ever since the relevant Committees of the two Houses of the US Congress adopted the Waiver Bills to enable the US to conclude a bilateral agreement with India to give effect to the nuclear deal, these lobbyists and the PMO have gone into an overdrive to convince the people of India that this is the best thing that ever happened in India's history, and there is nothing more for us to do except to stand up and cheer. They have dismissed the concerns expressed by eminent scientists, defence analysts and some of us in politics, as foolish, misguided, mischievous or at best, born out of complete ignorance. Let me try and put the record straight once again. The spokesmen of the government of India, including the foreign secretary, have repeatedly told us that the Indo-US nuclear deal is all about nuclear energy and not at all about non-proliferation.

The News, 8 July 2006

US stamp on India nuclear deal

The United States-India nuclear deal seems set to pass through Congress, but it will bear a distinctive American imprint that sets it apart from the agreement signed last July. This is polarising Indian domestic opinion as never before. The agreement's supporters exult over the passage of resolutions in the House of Representatives and Senate foreign relations committees, which give the president the crucial authority to waive certain provisions of the US Atomic Energy Act, 1954, which would negate the implementation of the deal. They claim this is a 'historic' achievement, and fulfilment of India's 'second tryst with destiny'. The deal's critics range from the left to the far right. Their grounds are that it compromises India's sovereignty, interferes with foreign policy (for instance, on Iran), and shifts the goal-posts set in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's agreements with President George Bush last July and this past March. The deal's more extreme opponents, such as former Atomic Energy Commission chairmen Homi Sethna and P.K. Iyengar, condemn it outright. They believe it will cap India's effort to create a 'credible minimum' deterrent. Sethna goes so far as to say that it would be better to sign the much-hated Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It at least gives a signatory the exit option; the deal doesn't.

Dawn, 8 July 2006

Pakistan, Japan agree to curb proliferation

ISLAMABAD, July 7: Pakistan and Japan will work as partners in struggle against nuclear non-proliferation and have agreed to enhance cooperation in this area. An understanding to this effect was reached between the two sides during their senior experts-level talks on disarmament and non-proliferation in Tokyo on Thursday. "Cooperation in peaceful use of nuclear technology also came under discussion in the meeting," a Foreign Office statement said here on Friday. The Japanese side appreciated the efforts being made by Pakistan to strengthen its export controls and expressed its readiness to extend further cooperation in this area, it said. According to the statement both sides agreed to explore avenues for possible future cooperation in the framework of a senior experts-level working group. The talks also covered matters relating to regional and global security, it said, adding that the Pakistan side underscored the need for maintaining strategic and conventional stability in South Asia. The Pakistani delegation was headed by Khalilullah Qazi, Director General Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs while the Japanese side was led by Takeshi Nakane, Director General Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The next round of the talks will be held in Islamabad in 2007.

Daily Times, 8 July 2006

Pakistan working to improve N-capability, MPs told

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has achieved the target of minimum deterrence and is now working to improve the quality of its nuclear capability, officials of the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) informed parliamentarians at a briefing at the Joint Staff Headquarters on Friday. The parliamentarians belonging to five standing committees of the Senate and the National Assembly participated in the briefing. The five committees included the NA committees on defence, foreign affairs and defence production, and Senate committees on defence and foreign affairs. SPD

Director General Lt General Khalid Kidwai briefed the parliamentarians about the country's strategic assets, their safety and security. The briefing provided an in-depth perspective on the command, control and communication system functioning under the SPD. The briefing also focused on Pakistan's acquisition of a minimum deterrence that is today a major factor for promoting national security and preserving peace and stability in the region. A participant, asking not to be named, told Daily Times that the SPD officials said Pakistan was working on the long-term nuclear policy because India had already adopted a long-term nuclear policy. He said the participants were informed about the issue of Dr AQ Khan. He quoted the officials as saying that status quo regarding Dr Khan would be maintained.

The Indian Express, 9 July 2006

Agni-III test fired by India

Dhamra (Orissa), July 9: India's most sophisticated Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) Agni-III was on Sunday test-fired from a range off the Orissa coast. The indigenously built surface-to-surface nuclear capable missile, with a range of 3,500 km, was test-fired from a fixed platform at the launch complex of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at the Wheeler's Island at about 11.05 am, defence sources said. Described as the most powerful of India's missiles developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Agni-III has the capability of carrying a payload of 1000 kg, the sources said. Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee and his scientific advisor M Natarajan were present at the launch complex located in the Wheeler Island off the Dhamra coast to witness the launch of the missile. Eyewitnesses said the sleek missile roared into the overcast sky leaving behind a trail of thick yellow smoke and fire and vanished into the clouds within seconds.

Hindustan Times, 9 July 2006

Agni-III develops snag, falls into sea

Orissa: India on Sunday test-fired its most advanced intermediate range ballistic missile Agni-III but it developed a snag and fell into the sea off the coast of Orissa without hitting the target, defence sources said. The launch of the nuclear-capable missile, designed to hit targets at a distance of 3,500 km, from the Integrated Test Range at Wheeler Island was "successful" but its second stage did not separate and it fell into the sea, the sources said. They said the missile went up vertically to a height of about 12 km before the snag developed. The sources attributed the problem to a "design failure". Officially, there was no confirmation of any problem, with a spokesman confining himself to a terse statement that "the missile took off successfully" at 11.03 hours IST. He said "the flight performance" was being analysed by the mission team. Sources in the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which developed the missile and launched it, said complete details of the test-firing would be known in "a day or two". The surface-to-surface missile had blasted off from a fixed platform as Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and top defence scientists looked on.

Hindustan Times, 9 July 2006

DRDO to conduct more test trials of Agni-III missile

New Delhi: Undaunted by the partial failure of test-firing of the country's most powerful and longer reach 3,500 km range Agni-III missile, Defence Research and Development Organisation scientists today said more trials of the IRBM missile would be conducted in months ahead to make it fool-proof. "It was our first experiment with such a long range missile and in the next few days, we will analyse faults in order to rectify them," the scientists told. They said the entire data of the testing of the missile from its launch to a snag developing in the second stage was being analysed and "we are hopeful of rectifying it". When the missile veered off course, the scientist had been closely monitoring the trajectory of the missile, they said. Prior to the launch of the missile, DRDO scientists had carried out cold sea bed trials of critical components and subsistence of missile and this would enable pinpointing of the snag. "We will have to carry out more tests of the missile in the coming months," the scientists said.

Hindustan Times, 9 July 2006

India informed about Agni-III test firing: Pak

Islamabad: Pakistan on Sunday said India had informed it in advance about the test firing of its nuclear-capable intermediate range ballistic missile Agni-III, as part of a bilateral agreement. "We have been informed of the test by India as part of agreement on the test firing of missiles," Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said when her reaction was sought on the test firing of Agni-III, which is capable of hitting targets at a distance of 3,500 kms, from a range in the Bay of Bengal on Sunday. She declined to say anything more. Pakistani strategic analyst Asghar Ali Rizvi, however, claimed that the missile test was aimed at projecting India's ambitions to become a regional power and play a more pro-active role in the regional security. The missile would bring most of the

Chinese cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, into its range, he told the private Geo TV. For Pakistan, he said, India had a specific set of missiles, which were of short and medium ranges, but Agni-III could spur Islamabad to speed up its long-range Shaheen missile plans.

The Times of India, 9 July 2006

Agni-III paves way for longer range ICBM

NEW DELHI: The test-firing of the 3500-km range Agni-III has paved the way for the country to produce intercontinental range ballistic missiles and provided it a robust second strike nuclear capability, defence scientists said on Sunday. Unlike the Prithvi and earlier versions of the Agni surface-to-surface missiles, the launch of the Agni-III by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) by using all solid fuel propellant systems signalled that India has achieved complete indigenous capability and self-reliance in this field, they said. This, DRDO sources said, will increase accuracy and marginalise failure rates in the launch of the surface-to-surface missiles. Agni-III supports a wide range of warheads, both conventional and nuclear, with a total payload weight of 600 kg to 1,800 kg, and features decoys and other anti-ballistic counter-measures, they said. The missile can be deployed using rail or road mobile launch vehicles, and has an inertial guidance system with improved optical or radar terminal phase correlation capability to guide it accurately to its target. DRDO sources said this gives the Agni-III a high degree of accuracy with a medium to large nuclear payload, most likely a 200-300 kilotonne warhead.

The Asian Age, 9 July 2006

U.S. mission is to cap, freeze, control nuclear India

Soon after the 1998 nuclear tests, a US government committee examining the failure of the fabulously-equipped and richly endowed US intelligence agencies to forewarn the White House about the resumption of explosive testing by India, concluded that the Indian nuclear programme and strategic decision-making loops in the government were insufficiently penetrated and the quality of HUMINT (human intelligence) needed upgrading. More recently, Pentagon decided to spend in excess of \$300 million annually on "disinformation" campaigns worldwide. The result of the seamless dovetailing of these two mission areas is reflected, for instance, in the recent unearthing by the Indian counter-intelligence of strategically-placed "moles" assiduously cultivated by CIA, as former senior RAW official, B. Raman, had apprehended early. (Who knows how many more are burrowed in even higher reaches of the Indian policy establishment and where?) And, in the orchestration of public support in India for the nuclear deal via efficient "media management." (Is it a coincidence, honourable exceptions aside, that the bulk of the mainstream English-language Indian print and electronic media supposedly shaping the views of the Indian middle-class have rarely carried articles or presentations critical of the deal?)

The Indian Express, 9 July 2006

British majors hold promise for India's N-subs

Glasgow, July 9: British defence majors are expressing readiness to export frontline weapons technology to India and 'Thales UK' has even offered to sell some critical sub-systems for New Delhi's top secret nuclear submarine project. "Here we have developed a non-hull penetrating technology to remove cumbersome periscopes from submarines. And we are ready to offer this technology for India's upgraded Kilo class submarines and its Advanced Technology Vehicle (ATV)," Peter McBride, Director Naval exports of the company said. Thales is making these non-penetrating hull masts and McBride said these new systems comprised the futuristic submarine combat management area. He said these hulls were now being installed in the US navy's Virginia class submarines and also being used for trials for future French Nuclear submarine. "These new hulls give the submarines minimum exposure above water and also long-range engagement capability. These hulls can be fitted in submarines with displacements ranging from 50 to 16,000 tonnes," he said.

The Indian Express, 9 July 2006

AQ Khan, scapegoat for mighty ones: Bhutto

New Delhi, July 9: Disgraced Pakistani nuclear scientist A Q Khan, blamed for heading a proliferation network, was made a scapegoat to save 'more powerful' leaders, former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has claimed. "We believe that A Q Khan was asked to fall on a sword in order to save other more powerful people and in exchange he was pardoned and was also allowed to keep the 400 million dollars too," Bhutto told in an interview at London. On Friday, the Pakistani military had claimed Khan had run a 'private' proliferation network and had not named any 'state functionary' during his interrogation. It also said he had named only two ex-aides of Bhutto in this connection. Bhutto, currently living in exile in London, refused to accept that Khan was involved in proliferation on

his own. "I don't believe that Khan did this on his own. leader said.

Newindpress, 9 July 2006

Pokhran-II led to series of 'surrenders': ex-Navy Chief

NEW DELHI: Terming the 1998 Pokhran nuclear blasts as a "push-button" affair for the previous NDA government, then Navy Chief Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat has said the atomic tests led to a "series of surrenders in every sector of the national polity, economy and science and technology". Bhagwat, the first service Chief to be sacked from his post in late 1998, insists the Pokhran-II tests resulted in the "surrender of India's sovereignty" and a "culture and mindset of dependency" instead of adding to national strength and self-confidence and accelerating all-round national capability through self-reliance. In his new book "the eye opening: as I saw it", Bhagwat lists a number of policies and developments like the declaration of a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests and holding of summit-level talks with Pakistan in Lahore in February 1999, and claims these were detrimental to India's interest. "Pokhran-II was a push-button affair for the BJP-led NDA government which took office six weeks earlier (to the May 1998 explosions)," he says while noting that the tests represented the effort of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

The Hindu, 9 July 2006

Talks with IAEA on India-specific safeguards accord

NEW DELHI: Senior officials of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the International Atomic Energy Agency held daylong talks here on Saturday on an India-specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA. This is the second round of discussions in line with the March 2006 plan to separate India's civilian and military nuclear facilities. The IAEA team comprised Olli Heinonen, Deputy Director-General (Safeguards); Vilmos Cserveny, Director (External Relations and Policy Coordination); Johanne Rautenbach, Director (Legal); and Herman Nackartes, Director (Safeguard Operations). The Indian delegation included officers from the External Affairs Ministry. "They held useful and productive technical discussions on concepts relating to India-specific safeguards emanating from the Indo-U.S. joint statement of July 18, 2005. It was agreed that the two sides would meet again at a mutually convenient date to continue these discussions," an official statement said.

The Indian Express, 10 July 2006

Agni-III snag to be examined: Pranab

Berhampore (WB): The snag developed in the Agni-III that caused the missile to miss the target would be thoroughly examined, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Sunday night. The reason behind the snag would be explored and the faults corrected, Mukherjee told reporters here. India's most advanced intermediate range ballistic missile Agni-III was test fired from Wheeler Island off Orissa coast in presence of the defence minister but it developed a snag and failed to hit the target.

The Times of India, 10 July 2006

Forces seek cruise missiles with N-tips

NEW DELHI: With the country's ballistic missile programme spluttering once again on Sunday, with the Agni-III ballistic missile test flopping, it's time that defence scientists speeded up their plans to develop nuclear-tipped land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs). The armed forces have sought LACMs, with ranges in excess of 1,500 km for precision nuclear strikes, say sources. Defence Research and Development Organisation has been working towards this end for quite some time now but sources say it will take at least another couple of years for such LACMs to become operational. Pakistan, meanwhile, has already stolen a march on LACMs by conducting two tests of its Babur LACM, touted as being capable of carrying nuclear warheads to a 500-km distance, with China's help. Plans are now afoot to induct at least one full regiment of Babur missiles, with their road-mobile launchers, into the Pakistani Army by 2008. Pakistan, in fact, speeded up its cruise missile programme after India began showing interest in the American Patriot Advanced Capability-3 and Israeli Arrow-2 anti-ballistic missile systems in its eventual quest for a missile defence shield. Cruise missiles, unlike ballistic missiles, do not leave the atmosphere and are powered and guided throughout their flight path. They can penetrate missile and air-defence systems more effectively since they evade enemy radars by flying at low altitudes, virtually hugging the terrain.

The Times of India, 10 July 2006

China leagues ahead in nuclear, missile arsenal

NEW DELHI: Agni-III - a totally different system from Agni-I (700 to 800-km) and Agni-II (2,000-km-plus) - was to be tested for the first time in 2003. But it ran into technical problems, including snags in its guidance and

propulsion systems. By the time DRDO scientists thought they had rectified all the technical glitches last year, the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal was on the horizon, with proliferation hawks looking for ways to scuttle it. But with the nuclear deal crossing the first hurdle in the US Congress and Senate committees, India's political leadership finally mustered up the requisite will to go ahead with the test on Sunday. But it proved to be unsuccessful. Even though the country's integrated guided missile development programme was launched in 1983, it has been repeatedly hit by time-overruns, cost escalations and technical snags, as reported earlier. Agni-III's failure has even left a big question mark on India's eventual plan to develop an ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile), with a strike range in excess of 5,000 km. DRDO will have to rectify the technical snags in Agni-III as soon as possible since it remains crucial for India's deterrence plans against China. The missile, when it becomes operational, will be able to hit high-value targets deep inside China, including Beijing and Shanghai. The missiles now being inducted into the armed forces, like advanced variants of Prithvi (150 to 300 km) and Agni-I (700 to 800 km), are meant primarily for Pakistan. The Agni-II (2,000-km-plus) missile, which is still to be fully inducted, can target only western China.

The Indian Express, 10 July 2006

'India losing scientific edge to China'

New Delhi, July 9: Do something, China is outpacing India in the sciences. This was the alarming message Indian scientists tried to convey to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who chaired the second meeting of his Scientific Advisory Council (SAC to PM) at his residence this weekend. According to the Prime Minister's Office, council chairman C N R Rao "raised alarm at the dramatic increase in scientific research in China and warned that India may be losing its edge". Rao sought 'bold measures to revitalise science' in India. The SAC to the PM exemplified the Chinese specter using a recent study by the US government. According to the study, in the last 25 years, China's research output has increased more than 25 times in comparison to India's. The study compares the number of published research papers in both countries and surmises that all is not well with Indian science. "The difference between China and India is dramatic," says lead author of the study R N Kostoff from the Office of Naval Research, US Ministry of Defence, Arlington, US. According to the exhaustive 300-page study, between 1980 and 2005, China increased its number of scientific papers published in quality journals by over 104 times, while India could manage to do it only by 2.3 times. Concerned over the way China is making rapid strides, Union Minister for Science, Technology and Ocean Development Kapil Sibal says "we cannot lag behind China" and according to him the Prime Minister has tasked the council to prepare a roadmap "to reverse this trend".

The Hindu, 10 July 2006

The nuclear deal and `minimum deterrence`

The Indo-U.S. nuclear agreement will raise the financial and political costs of the Indian nuclear weapons programme but it does not impose a legal bar on the production of fissile material or the testing of nuclear explosive devices by India. BY NOW, the fact that the United States' offer of civil nuclear cooperation carries hidden political costs is well accepted within and outside the Indian foreign policy establishment. But if the political costs are tangible and have already begun to accumulate, what of the charge made by a section of the Indian strategic community - and echoed by the Bharatiya Janata Party - that the nuclear deal will compromise the "credibility" of India's "minimum nuclear deterrence?" Right from day one, the Indian side has insisted the July 18, 2005, agreement is about energy and not arms control. For the Americans too, the deal is primarily about fashioning India's energy choices. But there is also a non-proliferation impulse, as reflected in the reference to India's unilateral moratorium on nuclear weapon testing in the joint statement issued that day. Accepting this without extracting a reciprocal reference to the United States' own moratorium was a serious error of tactics and principle. Today, it is this commitment that is proving the most difficult to work around as India resists U.S. efforts to convert its voluntary no-testing pledge into something more legally binding. Specifically, the U.S. is trying to tie the assurances of perpetual nuclear fuel supply - as envisaged by the Indian nuclear separation plan - into a "no nuclear testing" condition. These clauses form part of the "bracketed" portion of the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (the so-called `123 Agreement`) currently being negotiated by the two sides.

Hindustan Times, 10 July 2006

Don't extort concessions from India on weapons programme: Expert

Washington: The US Congress would be ill-advised to try to extort concessions from India on its weapons programme because of a "petty canard" that the nuclear deal would enable New Delhi to rapidly expand its nuclear arsenal, according to an American defence expert. Criticism of the nuclear deal rests upon two crucial assumptions, says Ashley J Tellis, a senior associate specialising in international security, defence, and Asian strategic issues at

the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. First, that New Delhi in fact seeks the largest nuclear weapons inventory its capacity and resources permit; and, second, that the Indian desire for a larger nuclear arsenal has been stymied thus far by a shortage of natural uranium. But India is in fact currently separating far less weapons grade plutonium annually than it has the capability to produce, notes Tellis in a new study: *Atoms for War? US-Indian Civilian Nuclear Cooperation and India's Nuclear Arsenal*. Thus, the evidence suggests that the government of India is in no hurry to build the biggest nuclear stockpile it could construct based on material factors alone; it also undermines the assumption that India wishes to build the biggest nuclear arsenal it possibly can. Further, India's capacity to produce a huge nuclear arsenal is not affected by prospective Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation as India already has the indigenous reserves of natural uranium necessary to undergird the largest possible nuclear arsenal it may desire.

Daily Times, 10 July 2006

Indo-Pak nuclear CBMs

After the recent failure of the two Defence Secretaries to reach agreement on the demilitarisation of Siachen and India's consequent decision to postpone Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's proposed trip to Islamabad for a summit-level meeting with General Musharraf, the Indo-Pak peace process appears to have reached a state of strategic stalemate. However, both the governments must accept that certain aspects of mutual relations are too important to be allowed to drift. The foremost among these are nuclear confidence building measures (CBMs) and nuclear risk reduction measures (NRRMs). The aim of instituting nuclear CBMs is to avoid tensions arising from mistrust, misperception, accidents and military brinkmanship. India and Pakistan are unlikely to have such high stakes in a future conventional conflict that they would be prepared to risk nuclear exchanges. It was due to this realisation that India and Pakistan agreed in February 1999 at Lahore to engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts, and nuclear doctrines, with a view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict.

Hindustan Times, 10 July 2006

AQ Khan had his own N-network: Pak Army

Islamabad, July 8: Claiming that disgraced nuclear scientist AQ Khan had run his own "private" proliferation network, the Pakistani military has said he did not name any "state functionary" during his interrogation but only two ex aides of former Premier Benazir Bhutto in this connection. At the first-ever briefing of Pakistan Parliamentarians about the country's nuclear programme on Friday, an official of the Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division (SPD) said, Khan has not named any "state-functionaries" in the ten "de-briefing" sessions that were conducted after his arrest in 2004. Khan, currently under house detention, ran his own private nuclear proliferation network in the period from 1987 through 1998 during different governments and it was a "sole act of an individual," Director General of Strategic Planning Division, Lt Gen Khalid Kidwai, said in his three-hour briefing to over 50 odd Parliamentarians of the country. "A disclosure was made that Khan did not name any state functionary in 10 de-briefing sessions, except two dead individuals -- Maj-Gen Imtiaz Ahmed, military secretary to executed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Defence Advisor to her daughter exiled Premier Benazir Bhutto, and Bhutto family friend dentist Dr Zafar Niazi -- in this regard," local daily The News quoted officials as saying.

The Indian Express, 10 July 2006

Pokhran-II resulted in mindset of dependency, says former Navy Chief

NEW DELHI, JULY 9:Terming the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests as a "push-button" affair for the previous NDA government, former Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat, has said the nuclear tests had led to a "series of surrenders in every sector of the national polity, economy and science and technology". Bhagwat, the first service chief to have been dismissed from his post around seven months after the tests, insists that Pokhran-II resulted in a "culture and mindset of dependency" instead of adding to national strength and self-confidence or accelerating all-round national capability through self-reliance. In his new book *The Eye Opening: As I Saw It*, Bhagwat lists a number of policies and developments like the declaration of a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests and holding of summit-level talks with Pakistan in Lahore in February 1999, and says that these were detrimental to India's interests. "Pokhran-II was a push-button affair for the BJP-led NDA government which took office six weeks earlier (to the May 1998 explosions)," Bhagwat says while noting that the nuclear tests represented the efforts of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). "The much-trumpeted Pokhran-II... marks a U-turn surrendering India's sovereignty...", Bhagwat says. Pokhran-II was "claimed to be a great success for the new government, internationally, and with the superpowers...(but) we had created quite a mess for ourselves," he writes in his book.

Daily Times, 10 July 2006

Solana did not answer all queries on nuclear proposal, says Iran

TEHRAN: Iran said on Sunday that European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana was not able to answer all Iran's questions about proposals backed by six world powers that aim to end a nuclear standoff with the West. Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki also said the Group of Eight (G8) countries, which meet in Russia in mid-July, should not take decisions that could harm the current positive atmosphere in efforts to resolve the issue. "Solana cannot answer all of our questions and the ambiguities that we see," Mottaki said. Six world powers offered Iran a package of incentives to give up uranium enrichment, a process the West believes Iran is using to make atomic bombs despite Iranian denials. But Iran said the package contained 'ambiguities' it wanted cleared up. Iran has said it will reply to the proposals by August 22. The EU has said it expects a 'substantial response' at talks on July 11 between Solana and Larijani, before the G8 meet on July 15. "We think nobody should take steps to affect or make negative the current atmosphere," Mottaki told a news conference after a regional ministerial meeting on Iraq. "For example, we are not going to attend the next G8 meeting, therefore we believe any kind of decision-making without the presence of Iran in the G8 summit ... could harm the positive process that has been created," he said.

The Hindu, 10 July 2006

Pyongyang demands attention

The United States is not likely to succeed in its efforts to persuade the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions on North Korea for carrying out missile tests on July 5. A draft resolution tabled by Japan condemns the tests; calls on Pyongyang to desist from missile development and to recommit to a moratorium on launches; and, urges member-countries to prevent it from acquiring or supplying missiles and missile-related items. The resolution also wants it to resume the six-party negotiations aimed at capping its nuclear weapon programme. China, which believes that the imposition of sanctions would destabilise the region, has indicated that it might veto such a solution. Beijing and Moscow are of the view that a non-binding presidential statement condemning the tests would be a more appropriate response. A sanctions regime would not be effective if these two countries and South Korea do not choose to enforce it. Although North Korea's neighbours have suspended supplies of fuel, fertilizer and food, the embargo is not expected to last very long. While the U.S. has thus far maintained that it would at most agree to a toning down of the condemnatory language, it may have to change its approach altogether. Soon after the seven missiles (including the long-range Taepodong-2, which could fly as far as Alaska when fully developed) were launched, U.S. officials expressed the hope that the rest of the Security Council would come on board. They miscalculated that Beijing, which had urged Pyongyang to desist from testing, would react strongly to the display of defiance.

Dawn, 10 July 2006

North Korea's missile tests

For several weeks, the media speculated about the preparations being made at the Musudan-ri missile test site. North Korea was said to be ready to test its long range Taepodong-2 liquid fuel missile that could hit targets 6,000km away. Leaders of nations in the theatre and far away from it spoke sternly about the consequences. American experts with considerable experience of service in defence demanded a crippling preemptive strike against the launch site; others hoped that the anti-ballistic missile systems already in place would intercept it anyway. Closer home, in South Korea, analysts and politicians disagreed openly with the hype in the West and suggested that Pyongyang was, perhaps, gearing up only to launch a communication satellite. In the end, North Korea matched the fireworks of July 4 in the United States with a spectacular display of its missile power. An assortment of six of them, still not differentiated by class or category, lit up the morning sky and a seventh followed 12 hours later. The world at large discovered the defiant exploit before the North Koreans did and there was a torrent of adverse and alarmed comment. On the positive side, it seemed that even in this moment of demonstrating its resolve to counter a US preemptive attack with a 'relentless annihilating strike', North Korea had taken care to ensure that the missiles would not intrude into Japanese territory. One of the missiles plunged into the sea within 40 seconds of the launch reviving assessments that the technological problems of long-range delivery systems were still hobbling the North Korean programme.

The New York Times, 10 July 2006

The U.N. Sideshow on Korea

The United Nations Security Council certainly should register international condemnation of last week's North

Korean missile launches. But if any serious progress is going to be made on this and the related North Korean nuclear issue, it will not be through Security Council resolutions or sanctions. There are only three countries with any real leverage - the United States, China and South Korea - and none are doing all they could to nudge North Korea onto a less provocative course. Until they do, Security Council resolutions will remain a largely symbolic sideshow. Last week's missile launches instantly complicated the security picture in Northeast Asia, but they violated no international law or treaty that would clearly justify mandatory penalties from the Security Council. (India tested a long-range nuclear-capable missile just yesterday.) Individual nations, particularly the three most influential ones, would do better to devise short-term penalties and longer-term incentives to persuade North Korea to forswear nuclear weapons and longer-range missiles. The Bush administration should drop its reflexive opposition to direct talks. But before scheduling a meeting, Washington should call on North Korea to reinstate its moratorium on long-range missile tests and keep it in place for at least one year while talks on a permanent ban proceed.

The Times of India, 10 July 2006

Far East goes ballistic

North Korea's long-range missile tests only confirm the existence of an arms race across the region. After the financial crisis of 1997, most South East Asian countries began modernising their armed forces. So far, most have done so without compromising their autonomy in security matters. But, with China's military build-up causing nervousness everywhere and North Korea a source of insecurity, many governments in the region are starting to work with outside powers. Indonesia's president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has perhaps been the most assertive. Yudhoyono will meet Russian president Vladimir Putin in Moscow to discuss buying Russians newest fighter jets. Indonesia is seeking to form an air-defence squadron of 12 jets, with eight Russian fighters to complement the two Russian Su-27SKs and Su-30MKMs that it has already bought. Singapore has apparently opted to purchase 12 new F-15SG fighter aircraft from the US. Thailand's prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, met Putin late last year and tentatively agreed to purchase 12 Su-30MKMs. Malaysia has agreed to buy 18 Su-30MKMs over the next two years, while Vietnam has purchased 36 Su-27SKs, 12 of which are already in service. It seems that Russian fighter-attack aircraft are the region's weapon of choice at the moment. Russia's growing slice of the local arms market worries the US.

Hindustan Times, 10 July 2006

North Korea accuses US of war-mongering

Seoul: North Korea on Monday accused the United States of war-mongering amid a US and Japanese push to slap sanctions on the communist regime for its missile tests. Rodong Sinmun, the mouthpiece of the ruling Korean Workers Party, renewed its condemnation of the ongoing US-led Rim of the Pacific Exercise in Hawaii, considered the world's biggest international sea drills. US President George W Bush's "team leaves no stone unturned in its attempts to ignite a new war on the Korean Peninsula, regarding the peninsula as the key link in implementing its Asia strategy of aggression," the newspaper said in a commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency. It described "the large-scale exercises staged by the US imperialists after the Cold War as an extremely provocative and dangerous gamble aimed at the second Korean war." The newspaper did not mention Pyongyang's tests last week of seven missiles, which the regime said were aimed at bolstering its defenses against a potential US invasion. The Bush administration, which in 2002 branded North Korea as part of an "axis of evil," has supported a Japanese resolution at the United Nations to impose further sanctions on Pyongyang for the missile tests. But the resolution is opposed by China and Russia, which hold veto power at the UN Security Council.

The Indian Express, 11 July 2006

N-deal Bill set to get 'full House' nod

Washington, July 11: Observing that the House International Relations Committee had produced a "very good bill" on the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal, the Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on India Gary Ackerman has expressed confidence that the full House of Representatives will pass the Bill in a "large margin". Ackerman noted that with the "expedited process now in place, Congress can move on the legislation when all elements are in place" and that Capitol Hill is favourably predisposed to a legislation that not only strengthens the bilateral relationship but also sends a positive signal. India, the New York lawmaker noted was not like Iran, North Korea or Pakistan in that it is not a state sponsor of terrorism, has not proliferated its weapons or technologies of mass destruction and above all is a "true democracy". "If you wanted to be treated like India, be like India" Ackerman emphasised. Turning to the civilian nuclear deal, the Democratic lawmaker and a long time supporter of India maintained that the legislative process has indeed a long way to go and that while passage was likely, it is not a certainty and that

Congress would have to realise that it is dealing with something of historic proportion of profound consequences.

The Indian Express, 11 July 2006

N-deal: The turnaround of the US Congress

Starting with enormous disapproval for the nuke deal with India, the US Congress now lends it a shoulder. Walter Andersen gives the reasons for this change of heart. Several weeks ago, the chances of a nuclear deal with India anytime soon seemed unlikely. There was considerable skepticism about the merits of the proposal in the US Congress, which had to vote on a bill to make India an exception to American nuclear nonproliferation legislation. The debate on the issue seemed headed for the familiar partisan wrangling in an important election year. Congressman Tom Lantos, one of the bill's strongest supporters, voiced the uncertainty of a favorable result, by suggesting delaying a definitive vote. Yet, when the draft bills came before the relevant foreign relations committees of the two houses of the US Congress in the last week of June, the mood was much more positive. Several senators at the June 29 legislative mark-up used the word 'trust' to characterise their belief that the proposal will not undermine US nuclear nonproliferation goals. Still others argued that the likely strategic gains of close association with a rising India far outweighed the risks to nuclear nonproliferation.

The Hindu, 11 July 2006

Agni-III stumbles on its first flight

It was on a day in July 1980 that India successfully flew its first satellite launch vehicle, the SLV-3. The SLV-3's four stages all used solid propellants, showing that the country's scientists and engineers had successfully mastered the complexities of designing and building large solid motors. It was a capability that could be harnessed to build modern long-range missiles. Solid propellant missiles can be fired swiftly unlike those using liquid propellants, which must first go through a cumbersome process of being fuelled. Not surprisingly, then, the first stage of the SLV-3 became the basis of the Agni missile. What was odd, however, was that for many years, the Agni flew with a second stage that used a liquid engine. It was only in April 1999, ten years after the Agni was first tested, that the all-solid Agni-II was launched. A short-range version of the Agni, using only the SLV-3 first stage, was unveiled in January 2002. India's little discussed strategic posture based on the worst case scenario has been that it must be able to deter any attack from Pakistan as well as China, both being countries with which it had fought wars in the past and both possessing nuclear-tipped missiles. And to be a real deterrent, a range of at least 3,500 km is thought to be necessary. The Agni-II, which is thought to have a range of over 2,000 km, is clearly not considered enough. The larger and more powerful Agni-III with a range of over 3,500 km that was tested on Sunday (July 9) is intended to lengthen the reach and make for a credible deterrent.

The Hindu, 11 July 2006

Agni failure: scientists studying data

HYDERABAD: Scientists involved in the Agni-III mission began analysing the data collected from six radar and five telemetry stations to find out what exactly caused the missile to tumble into the sea after a smooth lift-off from the Wheeler Island off the coast of Orissa on Sunday. The propulsion powered by new rocket motors performed as per expectations and the causes into the deviation from the planned trajectory was being investigated, top sources in the DRDO said here on Monday. "These are complex systems and the cause of failure has to be reproduced on the ground through simulation from the collected data to take corrective action." The problem arose after 70 seconds, just before the ignition of the second stage. The complete analysis of the data might take at least a week for the scientists to come to a definite conclusion. Preliminary data indicated that 70 per cent of the mission's objectives were met.

Hindustan Times, 11 July 2006

India will not be in nuclear club: Rice

Washington: The Bush administration is hard at work to win legislative approval for the Indo-US nuclear deal before the US Congress goes into summer recess on August 4. However, Washington and its three major western allies are against India's entry into the nuclear club as a weapon state. "Let me be clear: We do not support India joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a nuclear weapon state," US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared at a joint power lunch hosted on Monday by two of the largest Indian American associations that have come together to lobby for the deal. "Rather, the goal of our initiative is to include India, for the first time ever, in the global non-proliferation regime," she said in a bid to sell the deal to critics who suggest that it would enable New Delhi to rapidly expand its nuclear arsenal. By requiring India to place two-thirds of its existing and planned civil nuclear reactors under the watchful eye of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), this initiative

would be a net gain for the cause of non-proliferation worldwide. This is not the position of the US government alone but also that of Britain, France and Russia besides IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei, the custodian of global non-proliferation, Rice declared.

The Times of India, 11 July 2006

Scientists not reading much into Agni failure

NEW DELHI: Brushing aside the unsuccessful test-firing of the 3,500-km Agni-III, defence scientists say initial preparations for testing the two-stage solid-fuelled ballistic missile again have already begun. But the second test of the missile, which is important for India's credible nuclear deterrence against China, will be undertaken only after the reasons behind the first test's failure are "fully analysed and pinpointed". "An exhaustive analysis of the missile test launch's telemetry data is being conducted to pinpoint whether the flaw was in design, manufacture or assembly of the missile," said an official. Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee is likely to be presented an initial report on the episode on Wednesday or Thursday, he added. After an initial powered flight, a ballistic missile enters a free-flight zone, which is finally followed by the re-entry phase, where the missile re-enters the earth's atmosphere from the stratosphere on way to the target. The test of Agni-III on Sunday, except for the initial launch, failed on each of these counts, with the missile plunging into the Bay of Bengal without reaching anywhere near the intended target. Agni-III did not achieve the intended high-arching trajectory it should have as per design projections. It did go up vertically for 12 km but then, rapidly lost height.

The Washington Post, 11 July 2006

Time Up for Iran's Answer on Weapon

The Bush administration is poised to press the U.N. Security Council to begin the process of imposing punitive action against Iran, after signals over the weekend that Tehran will not provide the straightforward acceptance or rejection today of a U.S.-backed proposal designed to prevent it from developing a nuclear weapon, U.S. and European officials said yesterday. European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana is scheduled to meet Iranian negotiator Ali Larijani today in Brussels to get an answer, a meeting that already had been delayed a week. But over the weekend, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Solana had not provided answers about what Iranian officials have termed ambiguities in the plan. Meanwhile, the Iranian ambassador to Switzerland said Iran would not be ready to provide an answer until August. In a telephone interview, an Iranian official in Tehran said yesterday that the regime had been transparent about its concerns. The United States and some Security Council countries have now concluded that Iran has decided to test American resolve and the solidarity of Security Council cooperation, U.S. and European officials said.

The Nation, 11 July 2006

Does Pakistan hold the key?

The controversy over Iran's nuclear programme is reaching a critical stage. With Iran insisting that it is not pursuing a nuclear weapons programme while USA and its allies alleging that Iran is doing exactly that, there are signs that the situation is going from bad to worse. At the moment, it seems quite likely that the UN Security Council may put sanctions on Iran and Iran is likely to retaliate by withdrawing from NPT. Iran and the USA, both are accusing each other as the instigator of this crisis. All the opposition to Iran's nuclear programme is simply because it is not ready to submit to the wishes of USA and Israel. USA insists that civilian research is just a facade and Iran is in fact trying to develop nuclear weapons so that it can attack Israel. As usual, the truth lies somewhere between the two extremes. All its proclamations of peaceful intentions notwithstanding, there is little doubt that there are not too many people in Iran who would mind their country becoming a nuclear weapon state. Being a signatory to NPT, Iranian government cannot pursue a nuclear weapons programme. It would be extremely naive to believe that Iran is trying to acquire nuclear weapons so that its 'crazy mullahs' can destroy Israel.

The New York Times, 11 July 2006

US Envoy Off to Beijing for N.Korea Crisis Talks

TOKYO: The top U.S. envoy on North Korea headed back to Beijing on Tuesday for an unscheduled visit as efforts intensified to find a diplomatic solution to a crisis sparked by Pyongyang's test-launch of missiles last week. Overnight the U.N. Security Council delayed a vote on a Japan-sponsored resolution to impose sanctions on the isolated state so as to allow time for a high-level Chinese delegation to talk to Pyongyang. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, who had been in the North Korean capital, returned to Beijing on Tuesday, apparently for talks with the U.S. special envoy, Christopher Hill. Vice Premier Hui Liangyu, who began a six-day visit to North Korea on Monday, was apparently still there. And North Korean official Yang Hyong Sop arrived in Beijing for a five-day

visit that would include a meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Xinhua news agency said. A State Department official had said on Sunday that Washington believed it had the backing in the 15-member council for the resolution to pass. "China has a diplomatic mission currently in the field ... we'll see how the Chinese do," Hill told reporters in Tokyo where he had held talks with Japanese officials on Monday.

The Hindu, 11 July 2006

Japan mulls deterrence

SINGAPORE: Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said on Monday that his country "must have deterrence capability" to face the challenges arising out of North Korea's latest missile tests. North Korea is Japan's neighbour. Clarifying the issue, following speculation that Japan might now seek to develop capabilities to attack the missile launch-sites in North Korea, Mr. Koizumi told journalists in Tokyo that the actual "form" of the "deterrence capability," designed to meet "various situations," would require expert opinions. He said "there is no harm discussing how to respond when a missile has been launched" in a manner that would put Japan in harm's way. However, "it is a different thing when it comes to saying that Japan should conduct a pre-emptive strike before actually being attacked." Being a "constitutional issue" under Japan's pacifist statute, the question of missile-deterrence "must be studied very carefully." On the diplomatic front, Mr. Koizumi said Japan would not press the United Nations Security Council for immediate sanctions on North Korea.

The Indian Express, 11 July 2006

Japan may postpone N Korea resolution

TOKYO, JULY 10: Japan said Monday it was considering whether a pre-emptive strike on North Korea's missile bases would violate its constitution, signaling a hardening stance ahead of a possible UN Security Council vote on Tokyo's proposal for sanctions against the regime. The vote itself could be delayed for several days, a news agency reported. China asked Japan to postpone the vote until later this week and Japan is prepared to accept, Kyodo News agency said. Japanese officials had earlier vowed to push ahead with a resolution that would impose sanctions on North Korea for its missile tests last week, but said Tokyo would not insist on a Monday vote. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters his government wants a vote on the measure 'as soon as possible. I think we must send a message that's as clear as possible' to North Korea, he said. Japan was badly rattled by North Korea's missile tests last week and several government officials openly discussed whether the country ought to take steps to better defend itself, including setting up the legal framework to allow Tokyo to launch a pre-emptive strike against Northern missile sites.

The Indian Express, 12 July 2006

Warm up to the future

A number of sceptics in this country have questioned whether the Indo-US nuclear deal is really about civil nuclear energy. They wonder whether it is not an elaborate plot to trap India into the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Fissile material Cut-Off Treaty. They all have a surprise waiting. It has been reported semi-officially that at the end of the forthcoming St Petersburg G-8 summit the US and Russian presidents will announce a joint civilian nuclear cooperation agreement. While President Bush is taking this initiative, the American Ayatollahs who opposed the Indo-US nuclear deal are expected to oppose this agreement too. But since this pact with Russia is with another nuclear weapon state and will be within the framework of the US Atomic Energy Act 1954, Bush is expected to go ahead without any prior approval of the Congress. The cooperation agreement will be placed before the Congress for 90 days for its approval or objection. Any Congressional rejection can be vetoed by the president and Congress would need two-thirds majority to override the presidential veto. So the agreement with Russia on civil nuclear energy cooperation may be taken as a near certainty. It might also be of interest to our sceptics that the US is vigorously promoting cooperation on civil nuclear energy with China too. While the US has dissuaded European nations from selling arms to China, it has not objected to Australia selling uranium ore for civilian reactors to China. In turn, China has accepted much harsher conditions than India to get the civilian nuclear energy.

Hindustan Times, 12 July 2006

Ackerman sees 'full House' support for nuclear deal

Washington, July 11: Observing that the House International Relations Committee had produced a "very good bill" on the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal, the Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on India Gary Ackerman has expressed confidence that the full House of Representatives will pass the Bill in a "large margin". Ackerman noted that with the "expedited process now in place, Congress can move on the legislation when all elements are in place" and that Capitol Hill is favourably predisposed to a legislation that not only strengthens the bilateral relationship but

also sends a positive signal. Ackerman was one of the main speakers at the Inaugural Unity Luncheon of the two largest Indian American membership association, the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin and the Asian American Hotel Owners Association, in Washington. India, the New York lawmaker noted was not like Iran, North Korea or Pakistan in that it is not a state sponsor of terrorism, has not proliferated its weapons or technologies of mass destruction and above all is a "true democracy".

The Hindu, 12 July 2006

Nuclear links with India will improve energy security: Rice

NEW DELHI: United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Monday that U.S.-India civilian nuclear cooperation would enhance energy security and "ease" New Delhi's reliance on hydrocarbons "from unstable sources like Iran". Delivering a speech on U.S.-India civilian nuclear cooperation in Washington, Ms. Rice claimed that by addressing India's "unique" nuclear situation "creatively and responsibly", the two countries would elevate their partnership to a "new strategic level". "India and the United States can accomplish great things in this new century. We can define this new era not as 'the American century', not as 'the Indian century' - but as freedom's century. This is the great calling of our new partnership," she said. Though the Bush Administration had worked tirelessly with the U.S. Congress to ensure that this initiative went through, Ms. Rice conceded that more work remained to be done. After clearing the hurdle at committee stage in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, the amendments to allow for civilian nuclear cooperation had to be passed by the full bodies of both Houses. "So we are hard at work with both Houses of Congress, especially with the India caucuses. And we are encouraging both the Senate and the House to vote on the civil nuclear initiative this month, before the summer recess," she said.

The Times of India, 12 July 2006

'Agni-III's tracking control system failed'

NEW DELHI: The failure of the "tracking control system" of the 3,500-km Agni-III, coupled with inability of the ballistic missile's second-stage to separate from the first, led to its unsuccessful maiden launch on Sunday. Admitting this on Tuesday, defence ministry officials said the initial report on the exact reasons behind the "partially unsuccessful" test-firing of Agni-III will be presented to defence minister Pranab Mukherjee on Wednesday. DRDO, incidentally, is also scheduled to make a presentation on the country's missile programme to the parliamentary consultative committee on Wednesday. As reported earlier by The Times of India, despite being launched in 1983, the country's integrated guided missile development programme has been repeatedly hit by time-overruns, cost escalations and technical snags. The relatively-primitive Prithvi ballistic missile, with a strike range of 150 to 300 km, is the only missile to be fully inducted into the armed forces. Agni-I (700 to 800 km), meant primarily for Pakistan, and Agni-II (2,000-km-plus) missiles are still to become fully operational. DRDO will, of course, have to work swiftly to rectify the technical snags in Agni-III as soon as possible since it remains crucial for India's nuclear deterrence plans against China.

Hindustan Times, 12 July 2006

Indian, N Korean missile tests incomparable: US

Washington: The United States has sought to make it clear that India's Agni missile tests cannot be equated with the widely-condemned tests by the reclusive Kim Jong-il regime in North Korea. Rejecting any comparison of the two, the Bush administration has underscored the stark contrast between the Indian and North Korean ventures. New Delhi, it noted, went about its test in a 'transparent and non-threatening' way, while Pyongyang defied neighbours and fired missiles as a provocation without warning. "There is a significant difference and a noteworthy difference between India and North Korea. India has pursued its programme in such a way as not to be a threat of provocation to its neighbours," White House spokesman Tony Snow told reporters on Monday. And India, he pointed out, notified its neighbour, Pakistan, about the Agni-III missile test and also informed the United States in advance about its plan. "It did it in a transparent and non-threatening way." In contrast, North Korea "not only defied the express wishes of its neighbours and others in the neighbourhood, it also fired missiles as a provocation, without warning, to others, and therefore, has created the diplomatic activity that you now see," Snow said adding: "So those are the significant differences between the two."

The Nation, 12 July 2006

North Korean missile tests

Following the seven missile tests conducted the previous week, in its first statement on the launches, North Korea's Foreign Ministry through the state-run Korean Central News Agency insisted that it had the right to test the missiles

and argued that the weapons were needed for defence. Defying world opinion, the North Korean government promised to "continue with missile launch drills" and threatened to "take stronger physical actions" against anyone who tried to stop the missile tests. After the first test of the long-range Taepodong-1 over Japan in 1998, North Korea in 1999, agreed to a moratorium on long-range tests. In 2003, six-nation talks began on N Korea's nuclear programme, however, in 2005, the talks stalled. In September 2005, North Korea pledged to abandon its nuclear weapons development in exchange for aid and security guarantees but the regime has refused to return to talks until Washington lifts financial restrictions imposed for unrelated issues, including counterfeiting. President Bush called the leaders of China and Russia to step up pressure on the reclusive North but both have been working to water down a UN Security Council resolution circulated by Japan that would stop any country from giving North Korea funds, material or technology that could be used in its missile or weapons of mass destruction programmes. As the United Nations debated what to do about North Korea's missile launches, the two countries with the most leverage over the hard-line state - South Korea and China - stuck by their policies of engagement and said regional stability should be paramount.

The Washington Post, 12 July 2006

China Critical of U.N. Draft on N. Korea

BEIJING, July 11: China said Tuesday that a draft U.N. resolution on North Korea backed by the United States was an "overreaction" to the country's recent missile tests and that the proposed sanctions would likely complicate efforts to restart negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear program. The declaration, read by a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, suggested that Chinese officials believe the best way to deflate tensions in the region is to get North Korea to return to six-party talks on nuclear disarmament, regardless of whether the Stalinist nation pledges to refrain from further missile testing. "China is opposed to the draft resolution . . . because that resolution is an overreaction," said the spokeswoman, Jiang Yi. "We think the response should not be an overreaction that would further intensify the problem. We think all measures should be conducive to resolution of the situation through dialogue." At the United Nations, British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said a member of the Security Council had indicated that any vote on the North Korea resolution would "not have produced an outcome," suggesting a veto was likely. Officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, identified the member as China.

The Hindu, 12 July 2006

Nuclear power is safer now, but we still don't need it

If someone had worked out how to cause a war within the environment movement, they could not have developed a better means than nuclear power. In public we will line up to attack the energy review published by the U.K. Government today. But in private we will reserve some of our venom for each other, as we start to ask ourselves whether we have made the right decision. The U.K.'s dying nuclear power stations are, at the moment, Britain's source of low-carbon energy. Electricity produced by a pressurised light water reactor, when all its carbon costs have been taken into account, emits around 16 tonnes of carbon dioxide per megawatt hour. Gas produces 356 tonnes and coal 891 tonnes. If the U.K.'s nuclear power stations are replaced by thermal plants, the country's annual output of CO₂ will rise by roughly 51 million tonnes, or 8 per cent of the total. This is breathtaking. We campaign to prevent electrical appliances being left on standby, hoping to save some four million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. How can we then dismiss a cut 13 times as great? Some groups, such as Greenpeace, the New Economics Foundation, and the Sustainable Development Commission, have produced reports showing that the Government's target can be met - a 60 per cent cut in carbon emissions by 2050 - without recourse to atomic power. They are right, but the target is now irrelevant.

The Tribune, 13 July 2006

Agni tests to continue, says Pranab

New Delhi, July 12: Country's top defence scientist M. Natarajan blamed the exodus of scientists from the country for the delay in some of the major weapon development programmes as Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee today said there was a lot to be learnt from the past mistakes and indicated that further tests for Agni-III would continue till success was achieved. Addressing the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to his ministry the Defence Minister, while counselling the defence scientists to "learn from mistakes", said there was nothing to feel disheartened about setbacks. 'Sometimes one has to be confronted with failure before achieving success,' he said while adding "we have to draw correct lessons from the partial success of the Sunday's 3,500 km range test launch of the missile". Cutting across party lines, members clamoured to know the reason for the failure of the intermediate range ballistic missile Agni-III and called for an "introspective review" of the role of Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) in the context of contemporary global situation.

The Times of India, 13 July 2006

India-like deal or not, Pak is determined to get N-power

WASHINGTON: Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri has declared Islamabad is determined to go the nuclear route to meet its energy needs whether or not it gets a deal similar to the India-US nuclear agreement. "We have the capacity, the infrastructure and the ability to do it, and we'll do it," he said after a lecture at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Tuesday. "Only it may take a little longer if US does not accept its plea." But Kasuri was confident that as a long-time friend, the US will buy its argument that as a declared nuclear power with the means of delivery, Pakistan itself would not like to divert sensitive nuclear technology to others as feared. Pakistan can also make a tremendous contribution to international non-proliferation efforts provided it was regarded as a partner and not as a target, he said seeking imaginative ways to bring Islamabad out of the nuclear 'netherland'. In Islamabad's view, a package approach would thus have been preferable in addressing the civil nuclear energy needs of both India and Pakistan.

Dawn, 13 July 2006

'Pakistan ready for bilateral N-freeze'

WASHINGTON, July 12: Pakistan will say 'yes' to a bilateral fissile material moratorium with India because its nuclear weapons programme is driven by the threat perception of its larger neighbour, says Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri. Mr Kasuri, who is currently visiting Washington, also said that the US would eventually 'begin to see the logic' of offering a civilian nuclear deal to Pakistan similar to the one it had reached with India. He told a select gathering at a think tank, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, that 'if India agrees, we are also prepared to go for a mutual reduction' in nuclear weapons. However, he said Pakistan would like to retain the current nuclear parity with India because in conventional weapons, it could not match New Delhi, 'aircraft to aircraft, tank to tank - so you cannot blame us for wanting to maintain minimum deterrence.' The foreign minister said he did not understand India's objection to US offer to sell F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. 'We are not competing with India. They are buying weapons from every possible source.' On Pakistan's demand for a civilian nuclear deal with the US, he said: 'Our position is well known. In our view a package approach would have been preferable in addressing legitimate civil nuclear needs of both India and Pakistan.'

The New York Times, 13 July 2006

New North Korea Resolution Offered

UNITED NATIONS, July 12: China and Russia introduced a draft resolution on North Korea in the Security Council on Wednesday and asked the Council's members to consider it in place of a Japanese-sponsored resolution, to which they both have objected, that would have allowed for military enforcement and sanctions. In offering the new measure, Wang Guangya, the Chinese ambassador, said he had instructions from his government to veto the Japanese resolution if it were put to a vote. Japan and its resolution's co-sponsors, Britain, France and the United States, have been putting off a vote this week at the request of China, which said action by the Council would interfere with a Chinese diplomatic mission now in North Korea. In Beijing, an American official praised China's diplomatic efforts and called for a unified response to North Korea's missile tests, but it was clear that fissures between the main Asian powers had overshadowed any common stance that might put pressure on North Korea. Christopher R. Hill, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, held talks in Beijing but prepared to return to Washington on Thursday morning without any sign that North Korea was prepared to return to six-nation disarmament talks. He called North Korea's stance 'discouraging.' The new Chinese-Russian draft resolution covers many of the same demands on North Korea that the Japanese-drafted measure does, but it significantly does so without resorting to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which would allow for military enforcement, and without proposing sanctions against North Korea for noncompliance.

The Washington Post, 13 July 2006

China to Block Vote Condemning N. Korea

UNITED NATIONS, July 12: China and Russia presented the U.N. Security Council Wednesday with a draft resolution that "strongly deploras" North Korea's July 4 missile tests. But it endorses only voluntary measures aimed at restraining Pyongyang's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs. The move threatens to head off a U.S.-backed effort to impose mandatory sanctions on North Korea, and places the United States, Japan and their European allies in the difficult position of having to offer concessions to secure Beijing's and Moscow's support or face a certain veto of their tougher sanctions resolution. China's U.N. ambassador, Wang Guangya, confirmed Wednesday that he is prepared to veto a legally binding, U.S.-backed resolution that would condemn the missile

tests, demand North Korea cease launching missiles, and ban trade in nuclear or missile technology with North Korea. Wang expressed concern that the resolution drafted by Japan and co-sponsored by the United States, Britain, France, Greece and the Slovak Republic might ultimately serve as a pretext for military action against North Korea.

The Washington Post, 13 July 2006

Major Powers Will Return Iran Issue to U.N. Council

PARIS, July 12: Diplomats from the United States, Russia, China and Europe announced Wednesday that they would return to the U.N. Security Council for possible punitive action against Iran, expressing "profound disappointment" over the Tehran government's refusal to stop its uranium enrichment program or respond to incentives offered by global powers. "The Iranians have given no indication at all that they are ready to engage seriously on the substance of our proposals," French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said in a statement read at the end of a meeting with his counterparts from the United States, European Union, China, Russia and Germany. "We have no choice but to return to the United Nations Security Council and take forward the process that was suspended two months ago." The United States and the five other major powers have offered Iran assistance in building civilian nuclear reactors as well as economic and trade incentives in return for Iran giving up its uranium enrichment program. Iranian officials have given conflicting signals about whether they would accept a plan and have repeatedly said they needed more time to consider the proposals since they were presented to Tehran on June 6.

The New York Times, 13 July 2006

Russia and China Inch Toward Iran Sanctions

PARIS, July 12: Russia and China, crossing a diplomatic threshold in the effort to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions, joined the United States and Europe on Wednesday by agreeing to seek a United Nations Security Council resolution ordering Iran to freeze some nuclear activities, or face sanctions. The movement toward a resolution represented increased anger over Iran's refusal to respond to an offer of economic and energy incentives if it suspended its uranium enrichment. Though punitive sanctions are in no way certain, agreeing to start down a road that could lead to them is a huge step for Moscow and Beijing, commercial partners of Tehran that have long resisted attempts by the United States and Europe to punish Iran at the United Nations. For the past five weeks, the biggest question on the incentives, presented to Iran in June, has been whether the fragile coalition of six countries making the offer would pursue sanctions if Iran refused to accept. After a two-and-a-half-hour meeting of foreign ministers on Wednesday at the ornate Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, the answer seemed clear - for now at least. "The Iranians have given no indication at all that they are ready to engage seriously on the substance of our proposals," Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said in a terse statement on behalf of the group, which includes Germany and Britain.

The Washington Post, 13 July 2006

On Iran, Giving Futility Its Chance

Let's imagine, and this is purely hypothetical, that President Bush has already decided that he will not leave office in January 2009 without a satisfactory resolution of the Iranian nuclear problem. Let's imagine that he has already determined that if he cannot obtain Iran's agreement to dismantle its nuclear weapons program voluntarily and verifiably, then he will order some form of military action to destroy as much of that program as possible before he leaves. Let's imagine that he has resolved not to end his two terms in office the way Bill Clinton ended his, by leaving every major international crisis -- from Iraq to Iran to North Korea to al-Qaeda -- for his successor. Let's say, just for the sake of argument, that Bush had made such a decision. What would he be doing right now? The answer is that he might be doing exactly what he is doing. He might be engaging in a prodigious and extended diplomatic effort to bring together the international community and, failing that, America's leading democratic allies in a unified effort to convince the Iranians that they should voluntarily give up their pursuit of nuclear weapons. And he would have learned from his Iraq experience that, to be successful in the present, profoundly unserious international environment, a diplomatic effort requires two things: evident sincerity and almost infinite patience.

The Tribune, 14 July 2006

Rise and fall of Agni-III

On Sunday when the first word about the successful launch of Agni-III, the latest version of this country's intermediate-range, nuclear-capable ballistic missile, came in there was an understandable wave of joy across the

country. It soon developed into euphoria, and then came the anti-climax. Instead of hitting the target, the sophisticated missile simply sank into the sea. The gloom in the national Capital was palpable. The pessimistic statements that followed were aggravated by the failure the next day of the GLV launch though there is absolutely no link between the two events. In the most advanced country, the United States, the Space Shuttle perished not long ago, killing, among others, the legendary Kalpana Chawla. North Korea's defiant multi-missile firing only the other day underscores the point. That country is much ahead of India in the development and production of missiles, for the simple reason that China found it expedient to gift it a whole range of missile technology on a plutonium platter. All this having been said, one must hasten to add that the latest Agni-III test at Wheeler Island has lessons that we cannot afford to overlook. The first is that hitherto there has been too long a gap between two tests. If we want to be taken seriously as a major power with a credible minimum deterrent, we have to carry out many more tests of Agni-III within a reasonably short period. Mere technology demonstration will not do; there has to be a fully operational delivery system in place

The Times of India, 14 July 2006

Cheer the deal

Raise a cheer for Manmohan Singh, who stood firmly on the engagement with the United States. Raise another cheer for the much-maligned George Bush, who resolutely backed what his diplomats are calling an unprecedented strategic foreign policy initiative of the US government. Finally, raise a cheer for Rajiv Gandhi, who told me in 1985 that India's relations with the US couldn't flounder on the shoals of the Cold War because of the people-to-people exchanges. In America, there is a street word called 'the raspberry', which replicates a rude large intestinal sound. The raspberry is due to the BJP for their cynical opposition to the Indo-US agreement. As far as the Left goes, it tilts quixotically at windmills and should be ignored. As important, what about the losers in the Congress party itself and their knee-jerk anti-Americanism? They live and die by their proclamation of faith to 10, Janpath and are increasingly irrelevant in the policy debate. Thus, opposition to the Indo-US deal is cynical, predictable and does not count for much. So, let's look at some realities. India first conducted a nuclear test in May 1974 at a time when prime minister Indira Gandhi faced a growing challenge: the economy was reeling from the effects of her ill-advised populist policies.

The Indian Express, 14 July 2006

Ahead of N-vote, Burns, Saran meet in Paris

NEW DELHI, JULY 13: Just days before the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Cooperation Bill comes up for vote on the floor of both chambers of the US Congress, principal interlocutors from both sides Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns met in Paris today. The two officials discussed the next steps in the process given that versions of the Bill in the Senate and the House of Representatives are different in some respects. The reconciliation of both versions is an important aspect of the entire process. The Bush Administration is in touch with the Congress to ensure that some of the difficult elements in the Bill are modified or dropped in the final versions. Burns is said to have briefed Saran on the efforts being made by the administration on these issues. India had pointed out to the US that it was not comfortable with some elements in both versions of the Bill, which have been passed by a healthy majority of the relevant committees in both chambers of the Congress. In the Senate version, this relates to not giving India reprocessing technology. While this may not be an immediate concern, New Delhi would prefer not to have it as part of the law in the long run.

Daily Times, 14 July 2006

Iran threatens to quit NPT if pressed

TEHRAN: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad warned on Thursday that Tehran could halt UN inspections and quit the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if subjected to increased pressure over its disputed nuclear programme. The threat came just hours after world powers referred the crisis back to the Security Council for possible sanctions over a failure by Iran to respond to demands that it suspend work that could lead to the production of nuclear weapons. "Up to now the Iranian people have acted within the framework of the NPT and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)," the president said. "But if they reach the conclusion that Western countries do not have goodwill and sincerity... they (the Iranian people) will revise their policy," Ahmadinejad said in comments carried by Iranian state television's website. "If some are after creating problems, they should know that any problem created for Iran in the region will harm the interests of everyone," he said. "Americans want to create disputes, while everyone is trying to keep the atmosphere calm, to continue the constructive, fair and legal talks to resolve the (nuclear) issue." He told the United States not to 'interfere' in the dispute, saying it could be resolved in talks with the European Union.

The Washington Post, 14 July 2006

Incentives Offered to Iran Detailed at Security Council

UNITED NATIONS, July 13: The Bush administration agreed last month to consider lifting long-standing sanctions on the sale of commercial jets, agricultural equipment and telecommunications technology to Iran if it agreed to halt its enrichment of uranium and submit to more intrusive U.N. inspections of its nuclear program, according to a copy of the agreement made public Thursday. The offer, which would require congressional approval, was contained in an incentive package presented to Iran in June by the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany to persuade it to halt its nuclear activities. Foreign ministers from those six countries, who were meeting Wednesday in Paris, expressed frustration at Iran's refusal to quickly agree to the incentives and vowed to confront Tehran in the Security Council. The three-page confidential document was presented Thursday to the 15-nation council in advance of negotiations on a resolution that would demand Iran halt the enrichment of uranium and reprocessing of nuclear fuel.

The Indian Express, 14 July 2006

North, South Korea talks collapse

PUSAN, July 13: Talks between the two Koreas collapsed in acrimony on Thursday with North Korea saying its neighbour would 'pay a price' for the failure and the South withholding any aid to the impoverished North. "The South side will pay a price before the nation for causing the collapse of the ministerial talks and bringing a collapse of North-South relations that is unforeseeable now," said the North Korean delegation in the meeting. During the talks in Pusan, which ended a day earlier than scheduled, the South urged North Korea to explain why it had launched the barrage of missiles despite international warnings. But Pyongyang ignored the issue, focusing on economic cooperation and requests for aid. Meanwhile, China has asked Japan not to add fuel to flames by making "extremely irresponsible" statements, including launching "a pre-emptive strike" on North Korea. Japanese remarks in this regard are "extremely irresponsible", Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said when asked to comment on the repeated remarks by some Japanese politicians that Tokyo should launch a "pre-emptive strike" against Pyongyang.

The Washington Post, 14 July 2006

S. Korea Suspends Food Aid to North

TOKYO, July 14: South Korea on Thursday suspended humanitarian aid to North Korea until it agrees to return to international nuclear disarmament talks. The action infuriated visiting North Korean officials, who immediately cut off high-level talks in South Korea and stormed back home. The decision to postpone consideration of a North Korean request for 500,000 tons of rice marked the South's first punitive action against its impoverished communist neighbor since July 4, when the North test-fired seven missiles, including a long-range Taepodong-2. The move came as the administration of South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun confronted sharp public criticism at home for what many there viewed as a weak response to the tests. South Korea also reiterated its deep opposition to a push by Japan and the United States to impose broader sanctions on North Korea through a draft resolution at the U.N. Security Council. Seoul has vowed to maintain its "sunshine policy" of engagement, which has fostered the warmest ties between the Stalinist North and the capitalist South since the Korean War ended in stalemate more than half a century ago.

Daily Times, 14 July 2006

Cooperation or not, Pakistan will acquire N-energy: Kasuri

LAHORE: Pakistan will acquire nuclear energy on its own if developed countries do not cooperate in this regard, said Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri. Talking to the Voice of America on Thursday, Kasuri said that nuclear energy was vital for Pakistan because the country had to fulfil its energy requirements through less expensive means. He said the US might change its attitude and agree to provide civil nuclear energy to Pakistan. He said that nuclear energy is refused to countries that may use it to make nuclear weapons, but Pakistan is already a declared nuclear state. "We want nuclear energy for cheaper electricity only," he added. Kasuri said that Pakistan was improving its relations with the US in the fields of education, science and technology, defence and energy. He added that both countries had started talks on some sectors and the remaining will be discussed at the ministerial level soon. The foreign minister said that Pakistan couldn't sign a bilateral investment treaty with the US because it was not in the country's interest. On Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, Kasuri said the Pakistan government had made it clear to the Afghan government that discussing sensitive issues in the press was not in the interest of both countries. Even the US administration agrees with Pakistan in this regard, he added.

The Asian Age, 15 July 2006

Deal pushers

The events that have followed since the nuclear deal was signed a year ago in Washington have tracked almost perfectly with what was apparent to all but the naive and the suborned. The more the deal has unfolded, the greater the US demands have turned out to be and the clearer it has become that India is being made to accept exceptionally noxious obligations that no other nuclear power will stoop to even consider. To the acute embarrassment of the now-taciturn Prime Minister who has relied on a few self-serving bureaucrats, none of his assurances to the nation has come true. Nary a word has been said by the PM since the US Senate and House committees rewrote the basic provisions of the deal and attached a string of demeaning conditions applicable to India. What was touted as a "deal" has turned into an undisguised diktat by a patron seeking to anoint a client. The PM's silence has been deafening. Even the voluble foreign secretary, ever so ready to grant television interviews and hold forth in the style of a politician, has been unusually reticent. The deal's first anniversary is an occasion for sober reflection on how commitments to a foreign power on a programme that epitomises India's pride and autonomy have generated intense national controversy and angst and displaced political consensus with partisanship, with paid lobbyists having a field day. Rarely before in India's independent history has an issue so disconcerted the nation as this deal.

The Tribune, 15 July 2006

India to pay a price for nuclear test: Saran

New Delhi, July 14: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran today cautioned that India would have to pay a price if it were to break the moratorium on further nuclear tests. 'If this has to be done, I am sure, the government will decide in the supreme national interest,' Mr Saran said while speaking at a discussion on 'Indo-US Joint Statement of July 2005: A Year Later'. The Foreign Secretary's statement assumes significance in the larger context of the Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation deal. Both houses of US Congress are expected to vote on a Bill later this month, which if passed, would amend the US legislation that has debarred the US from doing nuclear commerce with India for over four decades. An important feature of the Bills that passed muster at the Senate Committee and the House committee last month is that the deal would become a dead letter if India were to test another nuclear device.

Dawn, 15 July 2006

Deepening Indo-US ties

The recent voting in the US House and Senate foreign affairs committees in favour of the administration's legislation to waive the provisions of the US Atomic Energy Act, represents a major success for the US in its oft-expressed desire to strengthen ties with India. Ever since the US commitment (finalised in March 2006) to provide India with civilian nuclear technology was made during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Washington in July 2005, the intentions of the two governments have been quite clear. It was recognised that notwithstanding initial opposition from the non-proliferation lobby, the administration would succeed in getting congressional approval for the deal. Most analysts emphasised that the US-India arrangement signalled the two countries' willingness to promote each other's interests. They pointed out that while Pakistan could not expect similar concessions from the US, it was nevertheless essential for Islamabad to stress the adverse impact of this deal for Pakistan and the region as a whole. Regrettably, we failed to do so for many months. The Bush administration, on the other hand, attached such high priority to this agreement, that it galvanised not only its supporters within Congress but even urged leaders of major business houses and pro-Indian scholars and journalists to pitch in. The Indian community in the US was a major player and used its influence to convince those legislators who appeared hostile or even indifferent to the nuclear deal.

The Indian Express, 15 July 2006

West's carrots for Iran include research reactors

United Nations, July 14: A package of incentives offered to Iran if it agrees to suspend uranium enrichment has been released for the first time and revealed that world powers are prepared to provide Tehran with advanced technology and possibly even nuclear research reactors. The package 'which was put together by the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany' was given to the Iranians on June 6 and some details were leaked at the time, but the full proposal released late on Thursday showed a broader range of economic, political and energy incentives. They include improving Iran's access to the global economy by promoting investment, Tehran's membership in the World Trade Organisation, and the possible lifting of US and European restrictions on the export of civilian aircraft and telecommunications equipment. The proposal was sent to the 15 members of the UN Security Council a day after foreign ministers of the six countries that offered the package met in Paris to discuss

Iran's failure to respond after five weeks. The three-page incentives proposals confirmed reports that the six powers are prepared to help Iran build state-of-the-art light water nuclear power reactors and to give legally-binding guarantees that nuclear fuel will be provided to these civilian reactors meant to produce energy.

Hindustan Times, 15 July 2006

Nuclear materials dangerously vulnerable to theft: Researchers

Washington, July 14: Despite progress on security, tons of nuclear material are "dangerously vulnerable" to theft by terrorists across the globe, a private group contends. World leaders have failed to provide money promised for or pay strict attention to securing materials that could be used for a nuclear device or "dirty" bomb, the Nuclear Threat Initiative said on Thursday. As leaders of the Group of Eight industrial powers, including President George W Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, meet this weekend, reports from the group note that a fraction of the \$20 billion those leaders pledged four years ago to secure nuclear materials worldwide has been spent. "This threat is not being treated as an urgent, front-burner security threat by the United States, by Russia or by the world," said former Senator Sam Nunn, co-chairman of the group that focuses on nuclear non-proliferation. The organisation commissioned the two reports to assess the G-8's response to safeguarding nuclear materials. One was by the Managing the Atom Project at Harvard University; the other came from researchers at the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

The News, 15 July 2006

Pakistan firm on non-proliferation: FO official

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said on Friday that it is strictly abiding by Nuclear Fissile Material Moratorium and is extending full cooperation to all international institutions with reference to nuclear non proliferation. Foreign office additional secretary Tariq Usman Haider said the this his meeting with delegation of Missile Technology Control Regjme (MTCR) here. The delegation was led by Spanish ambassador Manuaol Viturro who was accompanied by Korean, Danish and Russian delegates. Tariq Usman Haider told the meeting that Pakistan was not partner of MTCR but it had fully upheld its objectives on nuclear non-proliferation. " We are opposed to nuclear proliferation and we are collaborating with all such institutions which are working for nuclear non proliferation", he added. The delegation lauded legislation enacted by Pakistan on nuclear fissile material moratorium and control on weapons export saying Pakistan is held in high esteem in the comity of nation on this count. This is third round of talks held between Pakistan and MTCR.

The Times of India, 15 July 2006

Pak may re-open probe into AQ Khan episode

ISLAMABAD: After assertions by Pakistan government that the probe chapter into the nuclear proliferation network of disgraced scientist AQ Khan was closed, President Pervez Musharraf has now said fresh investigations would be carried out if new evidence surfaced. "You asked whether the case is closed or not. I do not know. The case closed but if there is new evidence we will again investigate. I cannot say. If he (Khan) tells everything it will be complete. If new documentary evidence comes with his signatures what I can say about it," Musharraf said in an interview to 'Business Plus' channel telecast on Thursday night. His comments add new dimension to the issue as Pakistan Foreign Office recently said the "chapter of investigation" into Khan's clandestine network was "closed." The move had drawn angry reactions from the US Congress which appointed a committee to re-open probe into Khan's network and began hearings. In his interview, Musharraf said phrases like 'arms twisting' and 'exertion of pressure' by the US were created by the media and opposition parties and insisted that Pakistan would not hand over Khan, currently under house detention, for questioning to any foreign power but was willing to continue investigation on its own if any new evidence was forwarded.

The New York Times, 15 July 2006

U.S. and Russia Will Police Nuclear Terrorists

WASHINGTON, July 14: President Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on Saturday will announce a new global program to track potential nuclear terrorists, detect and lock up bomb-making materials and coordinate their responses if terrorists obtain a weapon, according to administration officials who have negotiated the deal. Within months, the officials said, they expect China, Japan, the major European powers, Kazakhstan and Australia to form the initial group of nations under what the two leaders are calling 'The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.' The informal organization of countries is based on the American-led 'Proliferation Security Initiative,' a group of more than 70 countries that have pledged to help seize illicit weapons as they move across oceans or are transported by air. Some countries in that group now hold regular drills to share intelligence and practice seizures.

But the nuclear terrorism initiative, the final details of which were worked out in a meeting between American and Russian officials in Vienna last weekend, goes beyond interdiction. It would operate inside the borders of countries with nuclear weapons and materials, setting standards for protection and detection, and develop common strategies aimed at terror groups.

The New York Times, 15 July 2006

UN May Be Close to Deal on N.Korea Resolution

UNITED NATIONS: Japan and the United States insisted on a U.N. Security Council vote on Saturday on a resolution condemning North Korea's barrage of missile launches amid signs of a compromise with China. After a flurry of negotiations on Friday, Japan produced a new draft resolution that sought to bridge the differences with China. But Beijing's ambassador said he would still veto it unless more changes were made, which many diplomats expect when council members resume negotiations on Saturday. "My instructions are to get a vote by tomorrow (Saturday)," U.S. Ambassador John Bolton told reporters. Tokyo's U.N. ambassador, Kenzo Oshima, said, "Japan stands on the same ground." The key obstacle is whether the resolution should invoke Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which can lay the groundwork for military force. But China and Russia, who on Wednesday introduced a rival draft, reject any mention of Chapter 7. Bolton indicated he was amenable to using other language which would make the resolution mandatory as Chapter 7 language does. But Japan's Oshima was silent and his last draft still included Chapter 7. Britain and France suggested alternative wording and China's ambassador, Wang Guangya, was in agreement and said he would check with his government, diplomats told Reuters.

The Hindu, 16 July 2006

We delivered on commitments: Saran

NEW DELHI: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said on Friday evening that India would have to pay a price, like it did in 1998, if it decided to depart from its voluntary moratorium and conducted another nuclear test. Speaking at the India Habitat Centre almost a year after the July 18 joint statement with the United States was issued, Mr. Saran said the government of the day would have to take a decision in its supreme national interest if India had to conduct another nuclear test. On the civilian nuclear cooperation understanding with the U.S., the Foreign Secretary, who returned from Paris on Friday morning after talks with his American counterpart Nicholas Burns, said that New Delhi had delivered on its commitments under the July 18, 2005 joint statement. Pointing out that the U.S. was now engaged in adjusting its domestic laws to enable civilian nuclear cooperation with India, Mr. Saran said India could not undertake any obligations beyond the July 18 joint statement and the March 2 separation plan.

Hindustan Times, 16 July 2006

Indo-US deal should be 'a priority' of the US Congress: Daily

Washington: The Indo-US nuclear deal should be "a priority" of the Congress as it would make New Delhi "less inclined to enter into billion dollar energy deals" with Iran, a leading American daily said on Sunday. In an editorial, the Washington Times also said that India has attained increasing prominence among world powers and, like the US, was "deeply involved in the struggle against terrorism," tragically emphasised by the Mumbai serial blasts. It said the strong support the deal had in Congress, "bodes well for the important initiative which would allow the United States to sell the material necessary to construct civilian nuclear power plants and Congress should make this legislation a priority." A greater supply of nuclear power would leave India less reliant on and "less inclined to enter into billion dollar energy deals with Iran," the daily said.

Hindustan Times, 16 July 2006

India's non-proliferation obligations lauded at G8

St Petersburg, July 15: The United States and Russia on Saturday called for expanding civilian nuclear cooperation with India, lauding non-proliferation obligations undertaken by New Delhi. US President George W Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, who held summit-level talks near here, said they welcome the important non-proliferation obligations undertaken by India as well as its efforts in the field of non-proliferation. "We strive for interaction with India in the field of civilian cooperation with the aim to satisfy her energy requirements as well as on issues for further strengthening global non-proliferation regime," the two leaders said in a joint communique issued at the end of their talks, according to the Russian text circulated by the Kremlin press service.

The Indian Express, 16 July 2006

At G8, Bush & Putin unveil joint N-plans

ST PETERSBURG, July 15: The US and Russia announced today moves to avert nuclear terrorism and halt the

spread of atomic weapons as they sought to give a boost to a summit. US President George Bush and Russia's Vladimir Putin unveiled the initiatives before other Group of Eight leaders arrived for a summit that will be challenged by violence in West Asia, Iran's nuclear ambitions and global trade worries. Referring to each other by their first names, Bush was at pains to protect Putin from his own administration's charges that the Kremlin leader was backsliding on democracy. "I fully understand ... that there will be a Russian-style democracy. I don't expect Russia to look like the United States. As Vladimir pointedly reminded me last night, they have a different history, different traditions," he said. "We of course don't want to have a democracy like the one in Iraq, to be honest," said Putin, a former KGB spy known for his dry sense of humour, after Bush cited Iraq as a country where the US is promoting democratic freedoms. In a separate initiative, Bush backed a Russian plan aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons by setting up international enrichment centres under the control of the IAEA.

The Hindu, 17 July 2006

India to raise `concerns over certain aspects' of nuclear deal

St. Petersburg: When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh meets President George Bush on Monday morning in St. Petersburg, he will take up his Government's "concerns about certain aspects" of the legislation in the U. S. Congress relating to the India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal that is supposed to grant "permanent waiver" to India. The concerns he will raise have "already been conveyed to the United States Government at all levels," Dr. Singh told Indian journalists on board the Air India flight taking him and his delegation to the G8 Summit. The Manmohan-Bush meeting is scheduled for 40 minutes. Serious concern has been expressed in India, by nuclear energy experts among others, that the U.S. House of Representatives Bill (HR 5682) contains provisions that go way beyond the July 18, 2005 nuclear framework agreement and are highly detrimental to India's interests. These include out-of-line demands on India's nuclear policy and, most demeaningly, the explicit policy objective of securing "India's full and active participation with the U.S. to dissuade, isolate, and, if necessary, sanction and contain Iran." These provisions need to be read along with the reporting requirements on India's compliance with these policy objectives.

Hindustan Times, 17 July 2006

India to raise concerns over nuke law with US: PM

On board Air India One, July 16: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said he will discuss with US President George W Bush on Monday the concerns raised by India on the US legislation for a civilian nuclear cooperation between the two countries. "With President Bush, I will review the developments since his visit to our country in March," the prime minister told on Sunday the accompanying Indian media persons on way to attend the G8 Summit of the leaders of industrialised countries in St Petersburg. "We will discuss the progress of the legislation for granting permanent waiver in the US Congress and our concerns about certain aspects of that legislation which have already been conveyed to the US Government at all levels," Manmohan Singh said. "I will have an opportunity to discuss these matters with President Bush. Our cooperation in the field of economic issues, agriculture and science and technology is moving in the right lines," he said on board Air India One.

The Indian Express, 17 July 2006

G-8 endorses N-cooperation with India

ST. PETERSBURG, JULY 16: Eight years after condemning India's nuclear tests, the Group of Eight industrial countries today broadly endorsed the nuclear deal between New Delhi and Washington. This historic reversal underlines India's changing nuclear status in the world after the nuclear agreement signed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W. Bush last year. Emphasising partnership with India, the joint statement on non-proliferation issued by the G-8 leaders here tonight noted the 'commitments India has made, and encouraged India to take further steps towards integration into the mainstream of strengthening the non-proliferation regime, so as to facilitate a more forthcoming approach to nuclear cooperation to address its energy requirements, in a manner that enhances and reinforces the global non-proliferation regime.' While the ponderous statement is hemmed in by references to "further steps" by India, it marks the long distance the G-8 has travelled since 1998 when the annual summit denounced India's nuclear tests. The government hopes that a strong G-8 statement in favour of international nuclear cooperation with India will improve the prospects for an early approval of the Indo-US nuclear deal by the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

The Tribune, 17 July 2006

Pak tried to acquire N-technology: Russia

Moscow, July 16: Pakistan had tried to illegally acquire missiles and nuclear technology from Russia and one of its

nationals who tried to gain access to weapons and dual-use products was barred entry into the country by the Russian authorities, a report published ahead of the G-8 summit said. 'Pakistani national Mohammad Aslam, acting as the representative of Tabani Corporation in Moscow, had tried to gain access and seek Russian weapons, strategic materials and dual-use products for Pakistan's missile and nuclear weapon programme,' said a white paper on non-proliferation issued by Russia. Moscow has banned Aslam from entering into the country, it said. The white paper said the Russian secret services had foiled attempts by 30 foreign nationals and companies that were trying to illegally seek Russian missile and WMD technologies. President of the Final Analysis Inc and US citizen Neider Modanlo has been declared persona non grata for attempting to illegally procure missile and space related blueprints in Russia for passing on to Iran.

The Tribune, 17 July 2006

United States warns North Korea against resolution violation

Washington, July 16: The USA has warned North Korea of tougher actions if it failed to abide by the latest United Nations Security Council resolution asking Pyongyang to cease its ballistic missile programme. "We look forward to North Korea's full, unconditional and immediate compliance with the resolution," America's Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton said. Bolton's remarks came after the 15-member council unanimously passed a resolution yesterday demanding that Pyongyang ceased its ballistic missile programme and asking nations to prevent the Stalinist regime's import or export of missiles. The final go-ahead to the Resolution 1695 is said to have come from St. Petersburg where G-8 leaders are attending a summit. Meanwhile, North Korea's top envoy to the United Nations condemned the Security Council resolution saying it was 'unjustifiable and gangster-like'. North Korea "resolutely condemns the attempt of some countries to misuse the Security Council for political aim to isolate and put pressure on the DPRK and totally rejects the resolution," Pyongyang's Envoy Pak Gil Yon said.

The Indian Express, 17 July 2006

Iran says UN nuclear referral not constructive

TEHRAN, July 16: Iran said on Sunday sending its nuclear file back to the UN Security Council undermined prospects for talks over its dispute with the West. Iran's case was referred back to the council after Tehran failed to respond to a set of proposals backed by six world powers which called for Tehran to halt uranium enrichment in return for economic and diplomatic incentives. Tehran publicly insists it wants to talk but has refused to give up enrichment. Western diplomats said Iran's top nuclear negotiator gave no sign he was interested in negotiating when he met the European Union foreign policy chief on Tuesday. "We believe that the proposed package is a suitable and acceptable basis to work on, but we believe that this package...should be developed through talks," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told a weekly news conference. "The path of the Security Council is not a constructive path. The constructive path is holding talks...if they refer the case to the Security Council, no matter what the resolution will be, it means that they have not adopted the path of talks," he said.

Deccan Herald, 18 July 2006

PM seeks 'constructive' answers to N-knots from US

St Petersburg: Keen to see an early conclusion of the pathbreaking Indo-US nuclear deal, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday conveyed to US President George W Bush India's specific concerns over the proposed American legislation granting waivers for nuclear commerce and sought 'constructive solutions' to these problems.....Keen to see an early conclusion of the pathbreaking Indo-US nuclear deal, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday conveyed to US President George W Bush India's specific concerns over the proposed American legislation granting waivers for nuclear commerce and sought 'constructive solutions' to these problems. During the 30-minute meeting at the Konstantinovsky Palace complex, Singh also brought up India's concerns over terrorism and Bush shared his anxiety, observing that 'America mourns the loss of innocent lives as a result of the terrorist attacks'. "There are some concerns which worry us and our Parliament," Singh said in an apparent reference to attempts being made to legally bind India against nuclear testing. "We are a democracy and we are accountable to Parliament which zealously keeps a watch on what we do and what we do not do," he said. Referring to the July 18, 2005, agreement on civil nuclear cooperation as a 'wonderful deal', Bush said, 'Our Congress is working on that important piece of legislation that will encourage and allow India and US cooperation, and I am optimistic we'll get that passed.'

Hindustan Times, 18 July 2006

1 year of N-deal: Bush says we're on track

Strelna, St Petersburg: US President George Bush assured Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday that he

would personally speak with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to completely curb the infrastructure of terror in Pakistan. At a bilateral meeting between them before the G-8 summit with five outreach nations (and leaders of the African Union and the Confederation of Independent States -- CIS -- and multilateral bodies like the United Nations and the European Union), Bush again condemned the "outrageous and horrible" attacks in Mumbai and Srinagar, and assured Singh of his "firm commitment" to fight unitedly against terrorism, senior officials said. He had, in fact, urged the leaders to send a strong message from the summit with the hard-hitting statement condemning terrorist attacks. Bush also "assured" Singh during their 40 minute-long exchange that the US administration was fully aware of Indian 'concerns' about parts of the legislation on bilateral civil nuclear cooperation that had been passed by both Houses of Congress in their 'mark up' votes, and would ensure that there were "no shifting goal posts, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said. Bush was "optimistic" that the legislation was likely to pass muster in the full floor votes "within the next few weeks," Saran said, but the bilateral 123 agreement would not go beyond commitments of the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement and the Indian Separation Plan.

Hindustan Times, 18 July 2006

'Indo-US N-deal to get final nod by year-end'

Washington: The United States has said the historic Indo-US civilian nuclear deal is on track and the "unique" agreement could receive the final approval by the end of this year if everything moves in tandem. "The agreement is on track...The legislation is moving quickly...Our Congress has been very supportive," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher said. Washington also said it was not aware of any other country making a proposal for Pakistan on the lines of the agreement with India. Interacting with foreign journalists on the eve of first anniversary of the historic July 18, 2005 meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W Bush, the senior US official, but, said he was "hesitant" to predict the timeframe for the deal to come into force. Boucher said the administration hopes that the House of Representatives takes up the legislation some time next week and the Senate soon after that. "Once each passes legislation, assuming that it is not exactly the same, they'll have to go through a conference, which would happen after their August recess. So perhaps in September they could put through the final legislation," he said. Boucher said US was working with the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) on the deal while India was into negotiations with the US and the IAEA on safeguards agreement.

The News, 18 July 2006

China may pay price for DPRK's missiles

BEIJING: None of the usual fanfare greeted China's high-level delegation to North Korea when it returned to Beijing over the weekend. Yet the official silence spoke clearly enough of the predicament bearing down on China after it backed a UN decision targeting its long-time friend Pyongyang. Vice Premier Hui Liangyu visited Pyongyang to celebrate a 45-year-old friendship pact with North Korea, and to coax the isolated totalitarian state back to disarmament talks after its July 5 barrage of missile tests alarmed Western capitals. But China's failure to sway North Korea and its weekend vote for the UN resolution condemning the missile tests exposed frustrations behind China's public vows of friendship, and raised the price Chinese President Hu Jintao may pay as he seeks to somehow both comfort and cajole Pyongyang. "The Chinese find themselves groping for an effective way of dealing with North Korea," said Peter Beck of the International Crisis Group in Seoul. "They're stuck with this problem child they can't get rid of." Just months ago it did not seem that way. In January, North Korea leader Kim Jong-Il made a nine-day visit to China. Hu hosted Kim several times, proudly showing him oversized vegetables at an agriculture institute. In October, Hu visited Pyongyang and was greeted with massive orchestrated displays of friendship and gratitude.

The Asahi Shimbun, 18 July 2006

Resolution on N. Korea

In a unanimous vote, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution strongly condemning North Korea for its ballistic missile launches. North Korea must fully recognize the gravity of that fact. Nothing in the resolution is extraordinary. It says the latest missile launches are a threat to regional peace and security, and that North Korea must suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program. It requires all U.N. members not to engage in trade with North Korea's missile programs or weapons of mass destruction programs. The resolution also strongly urges North Korea to return immediately to the six-party talks. When North Korea first launched the Taepodong-1 missile in 1998, all the United Nations did was issue a statement from the Security Council president, urging North Korea to exercise restraint. When North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1993, the Security Council resolution only called on Pyongyang to reconsider. In comparison, the Security Council this time managed to condemn North Korea in a much stronger tone. This is because the member countries

have come to consider North Korea's behavior--forcing its nuclear programs and ignoring other international rules--to be increasingly egregious.

Daily Yomiuri, 18 July 2006

G-8 raps N. Korea missile tests

Leaders of the Group-of-Eight major industrial countries ended their summit meeting in St. Petersburg on Monday with a chair's summary statement incorporating concerns over North Korea's missile launches, abduction of foreign nationals and nuclear program. The statement called for an early resolution of the abduction issue. The G-8 members also issued a statement on the escalating situation in the Middle East, condemning the guerrilla attacks on Israel launched from Lebanon and calling on Israel, which has attacked Lebanon in retaliation, to exercise restraint. The chair's summary "supports the [Saturday] U.N. resolution that condemns the launches by North Korea of ballistic missiles, and urges Pyongyang to reestablish its preexisting commitment to a moratorium on missile launching." It calls on North Korea to freeze its missile tests in line with the spirit of the 2002 Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration and the joint statement issued in September 2005 by the six nations involved in talks on North Korea's nuclear program. The summary statement also "urges North Korea to respond to other security and humanitarian concerns of the international community, including early resolution of the abduction issue." It also demands that North Korea scrap its nuclear weapons and nuclear program and immediately and unconditionally return to the six-way talks. This was the first time a G-8 chair's summary has included mention of North Korea's missile, nuclear and abduction issues.

The Hindu, 19 July 2006

Manmohan hopeful Bush will set right nuclear deal

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asserted that in response to the concerns he raised on Monday, he received assurances from President George Bush that the parameters laid down in the Indo-U.S. Joint Statement of July 18, 2005, the Separation Plan, and the statement of March 2, 2006 would be the "guiding factors" in the final shape of the legislation the United States Congress would adopt. Mr. Bush also promised him that "the administration would do everything in its power to facilitate that outcome." Asked if he got any clear message that there would be no shifting of the goal-post, Dr. Singh replied: "Of course, that's what the President said. You heard him. In the full glare of the media, he said that." The Prime Minister was speaking to journalists on board the special Air India flight bringing him and the Indian delegation back home from the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg on Tuesday.

The Indian Express, 19 July 2006

Final seal on N-deal by year-end: US

St Petersburg, July 18: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday concluded his three-day visit in St Petersburg on a 'highly successful' note with world leaders coming strongly against terrorism and showing 'deep understanding' of India's concerns on energy security and United States assuring that the historic Indo-US civilian nuclear deal was on track. President Bush had also expressed optimism that the nuclear deal would go through with the US Congress finalising the requisited legislation in the next few weeks. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher said that the "unique" agreement could receive the final approval by the end of this year if everything moves in tandem. Boucher said the administration hopes that the House of Representatives takes up the legislation some time next week and the Senate soon after that. "Once each passes legislation, assuming that it is not exactly the same, they'll have to go through a conference, which would happen after their August recess. So perhaps in September they could put through the final legislation," he said.

The Indian Express, 19 July 2006

'No need to fear N-safeguards agreement'

NEW DELHI, JULY 18:As critics of the Indo-US nuclear deal object to the sequencing being suggested by the US Congress that requires New Delhi to sign the safeguards agreement with IAEA first, one of the key US negotiators of the deal has advised India that it can negotiate the agreement now but implement it only after the change in law comes into effect. Ashley Tellis, a senior associate with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a member of the US negotiating team that finalised the deal ahead of President Bush's visit, told The Indian Express that sequencing will not come in the way of implementing the agreement unless someone made it a point of principle. "India can do what the Congress is doing. It can say that the safeguards agreement will become effective only after law in the US Congress is passed... but let me say, nobody is out to trick you. It is not like you put reactors under safeguards and then we say, sorry, no legislation," said Tellis who has given the same advice to

Indian diplomats here. With the legislation enabling full Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation making a promising start in the US Congress, Tellis does not see any major roadblocks to the deal now. On the sense of Congress, which calls for supporting American policy to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, he feels it needs to be taken seriously though it is not binding.

Hindustan Times, 19 July 2006

The Grand Illusion

Eminent Indian nuclear scientists have been expressing their concern about the contents and direction of the Indo-US nuclear deal signed last July. Strategic analysts, former diplomats, prominent politicians and knowledgeable commentators have repeatedly cautioned the government about the minefields ahead. Ought not the government pause and clear these doubts? There is little effort towards this end, and we all seem to be running blind. The concern is not that India and the US have a nuclear deal or that the two countries have begun to warm up to each other. Not at all. The issue is that this deal will lead us to the NPT through the backdoor, cap our weapons potential and reduce India to a perpetual secondary status, and that supporters of the deal have not read the fine print. The manner in which the deal was signed, and the manner in which it has been made to stand on its head with all the new conditionalities, also make it suspect. We are told that the sceptics do not understand the big picture and are out of the loop. The fear is that the deal will tie us down in a bind forever and that in our eagerness to clinch the deal we are rationalising irrationality.

The Statesman, 19 July 2006

Iran may withdraw from NPT

TEHRAN, July 18: A senior Iranian lawmaker said today that parliament was preparing to debate the country's withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Mr Alaeddin Boroujerdi, parliament's foreign affairs chairman, said Iran might decide to withdraw if the UN Security Council adopted any resolution that would force Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment. "If the UN Security Council wants to issue a binding resolution demanding a halt in uranium enrichment, parliament is prepared to discuss suspension of Iran's membership in the NPT," the official Islamic Republic News Agency quoted Mr Boroujerdi as saying. Mr Boroujerdi's remarks suggested growing sentiment in the conservative-dominated parliament to withdraw from the treaty if the council votes to impose sanctions.

The Hindu, 20 July 2006

Review nuclear deal: Rajnath

Guwahati: Bharatiya Janata Party president Rajnath Singh on Wednesday called for reviewing the nuclear deal with the United States as accepting the deal would amount to the country giving up its sovereignty on nuclear policy. "We should rethink about the deal in agreement with Parliament as it is feared that it is going to freeze the sovereign right to devise a credible nuclear deterrent in the future," Mr. Singh told reporters here. The BJP president said two former Chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission Homi Sethna and P.K. Iyenger had also said that India would be better off signing the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, which permitted the exit of any signatory nation, rather than the nuclear deal with the U.S. that would bind the country for perpetuity. He also demanded that the United Progressive Alliance Government make a statement in Parliament on the deal. Mr Singh, who was here to address the two-day State executive meeting of the BJP, asked the Centre to tell the U.S. categorically that a nuclear deal with India and arming of Pakistan could not go together.

Hindustan Times, 20 July 2006

N Korea 6-party talks may resume next week

Kuala Lumpur: Six-party talks to resolve a standoff over North Korea's nuclear plans may resume in Malaysia next week on the sidelines of a regional security summit, Malaysian foreign minister said on Thursday. "There's nothing to stop them in doing so," Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar told the agency, referring to the possible talks. "They are represented at the highest level. Even Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, has confirmed her attendance." The six-party talks, involving the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, China and Russia, stalled last November after Pyongyang objected to US financial sanctions based on accusations that it counterfeited US currency and trafficked drugs. Malaysia hosts the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the region's premier diplomatic event, on July 28 following annual ASEAN ministerial meetings. Syed Hamid said besides Rice, foreign ministers from the other five countries would be attending the ARF.

The Tribune, 20 July 2006

N-deal not before summer recess, says Senate Chairman

Washington, July 19: The Senate will not take up the Indo-US civil nuclear deal before the chamber breaks for the summer recess on August 4. "No. I hope after that," Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Richard Lugar told reporters after his address to the Indian American Friendship Council, celebrating its 10th anniversary here. The Republican lawmaker said Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist has not scheduled a vote on the US-India deal. In the course of his address, Lugar stressed that while there are some in the State Department and the Indian Foreign Ministry who maintain that Congress changed the language of the agreement that was reached, the changes are "constructive" and hoped that even if they are "controversial", the leaders on the two sides will not delay. Earlier, in his brief remarks to the Friendship Council, Senator Ben Nelson of Nebraska also made the point that the civilian nuclear deal may not be taken up by the Senate before the August recess.

Hindustan Times, 20 July 2006

N-deal approval a foregone conclusion: Bush Admn

Washington: The Bush Administration has said Congressional approval of the India-US nuclear deal was a foregone conclusion, going by the overwhelming support for the enabling bill in the foreign relations committees. "So far the votes have been overwhelmingly in favour in committees, and we'll just have to see how it proceeds. I mean, that's a no-brainer," White House spokesman Tony Snow said. President George Bush supports the agreement, and he had made it clear to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as also to members of Congress, he said. Two separate draft bills approving the Indo-US nuclear deal, as cleared by the respective foreign relations committees of the two Houses, are expected to come up for vote next week in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Snow, however, refused to be drawn "in the middle of a diplomatic dispute" over calling off of an upcoming round of India-Pakistan dialogue after the Mumbai bombings, saying he thought it was inappropriate to comment.

Daily Times, 20 July 2006

'CIA knew of AQ Khan network'

WASHINGTON: A former US defence official has claimed that in the 1990s, his office often sought to get the State Department to make diplomatic complaints to Pakistan about Dr AQ Khan's activities, which 'seriously violated multilateral agreements to which the United States is a signatory and US law against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction' but his requests 'fell on deaf ears'. F Michael Maloof, a former senior security policy analyst in the Office of the Defence Secretary, writing in the Washington Times on Tuesday recalled that his office frequently monitored efforts by Dr Khan's worldwide network to divert technology to Pakistan's nuclear weapons development programme. "We also sought Central Intelligence Agency assistance. The CIA has close ties with Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) which helped create Afghanistan's Taliban and still maintains ties with al Qaeda. Indeed, my office would often work with US Customs to track down some of Mr Khan's US technology acquisitions to halt them before they were exported to Pakistan."

Hindustan Times, 21 July 2006

N-deal: Big margin of approval predicted

Washington: The Senate may be a little slow to act, but it will act decisively in favour of the Indo-US nuclear deal, says John Cornyn, the founder and Republican co-chair of the Senate's 'Friends of India' caucus. Cornyn on Wednesday conceded that the Senate, unlike the House of Representatives, may vote on the deal only when it reconvenes in September after the summer recess, but stressed that he had no doubt about the big margin of approval. More and more Senators are said to be coming on board, indicating strong bipartisan support. "Things move slowly in the Senate -- it is the nature of the beast. But I think it (the N-deal legislation) is moving very well. It is getting good bi-partisan support and that to me is an indication that it will be successful," he said. The White House, meanwhile, is closely watching the developments on Capitol Hill on the issue. "So far the votes have been overwhelmingly in favour in committee, and we'll just have to see how it proceeds," spokesman Tony Snow said.

Hindustan Times, 21 July 2006

'Senate will clear N-deal with substantial margin'

Washington, July 20: A senior US law maker expressed confidence that the Senate will clear the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal with a "substantial margin" but has warned against pushing Senators "too hard" to pass the legislation as it will give a feeling that it is being forced on them without time for adequate deliberations. Senator John Cornyn, who is the founder and co-chair of the Senate India Caucus, also agreed with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar that the relevant legislation may not be taken up by the full Senate prior to it

going on recess on August 4. "I think this legislation looks very good. Things move slowly in the Senate -- it is the nature of the beast. It is also a function of the narrow windows of time available to bring things to the floor. But I think it is moving very well. It is getting good bi-partisan support and that to me is an indication that it will be successful," Senator Cornyn said. He was responding to a query after addressing war veteran groups pushing for the clearance of the nuclear deal. Asked about the possibility of the Senate taking up the legislation prior to the start of its August recess the Texas Senator replied, "I think that will be hard to get it done by then. We have so many other issues that have been pressing for a long time." He cautioned, "...What we have to be careful about is that we have to push as hard as we can, but we don't want to push it too hard and have Senators feel like we are trying to force this on them without adequate time to understand and adequate deliberations."

The Telegraph, 21 July 2006

For a pot of uranium

Scientists in the country's defence establishments, reports suggest, are seething with increasing resentment even as they become more and more aware of the details of the nuclear agreement the prime minister has signed with the American president, George W. Bush. They cannot articulate their protest given the code of discipline they are subject to. However, the gentleman who headed the team of scientists credited with the explosion in Pokhran in 1974 has spoken up: the provisions of the agreement, in his judgement, are so unfavourable for India that we would have done better by signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty instead. This senior scientist, now in retirement, has obvious reasons to unburden himself in such a forthright manner. The American administration, he and his colleagues do not have the least doubt, would use the provisions of the agreement to bring about a quiet and quick death to India's nuclear deterrent programme. Their fear is not without basis, for the draft bill submitted to the American Congress for ratifying the agreement is silent on the crucial issue of ensuring India's energy security.

The Asian Age, 21 July 2006

We need more n-tests for our defence

The total silence which the government has maintained on the Indo-US nuclear deal ever since the two recent Bills have been passed by the US Congress, is beginning to be broken, in small steps, through the speech given by the foreign secretary, Shyam Saran, in Delhi on July 14, and the Prime Minister's brief remarks on his return from Russia. Saran has warned that the final legislation in the US Congress "could well include some references that we may find unpalatable - but, we must focus on what is essential. India's obligations will only be those that we undertake in the bilateral 123 cooperation agreement and the safeguards arrangement with IAEA." But these details are known only to the PM and his close advisers and neither Parliament nor the leaders of the major Opposition parties have been taken into confidence. There is another zone of silence, this time in Washington, which too we need to take note of. The vociferous non-proliferation lobby consisting of arch rivals of the Indian nuclear programme for decades, have been writing strong letters to the US Congress and have given individual and scholarly testimonies to both the Congressional committees ever since July 2005.

The Tribune, 21 July 2006

Someone in Rao's PMO leaked N-secrets: Jaswant

New Delhi, July 20: Former Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh has alleged that someone in the PMO during P.V. Narasimha Rao-led Congress government had been leaking nuclear secrets to the US and 'we are still being snooped'. The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha said he had come to know about it a decade ago but remained quiet so far as he did not want to sensationalise the issue. "Yes, there was a person in the PMO. I have evidence, a letter which gives graphic details," Singh told India Today magazine when asked to elaborate on his contention that there was a mole in the PMO of the previous Congress Government. Without naming anybody, the BJP leader claimed that "somebody in the PMO was giving information about India's nuclear programme to the US. It was during the previous Congress regime..." He said "the honour of the Prime Minister's Office, to an extent, was at stake. We were snooped, we are still being snooped." Singh is facing renewed attack over the 1999 Kandahar hijack crisis when he went with three terrorists to Afghanistan to exchange 161 passengers of Indian Airlines plane IC-814 held hostage.

The Tribune, 21 July 2006

US war veterans back N-deal

Washington: Eight groups representing millions of retired US armed forces personnel have announced their support for the US-India civil nuclear deal saying it will serve the future security interests of America. The show of support from the veterans - former members of U.S. armed forces and their families - is the most significant so far for

passage of this agreement for national security reasons. The groups have over 9,000 chapters and posts across the US and are present in every congressional district. In an advertisement published in Roll Call, a prominent Capitol Hill newspaper, the group notes India 'can help American security interests in the region in a way no other nation can.' The Indian American Security Leadership Council, founded by Ramesh V. Kapur of Massachusetts, paid for the ad. In an interview with The Tribune, Mr Kapur said bipartisan support for the deal was partly due to the fact that 'Republicans have the fear of God, and Democrats have the fear of national security.' Describing the nuclear deal as the "glue that will cement our two countries," Mr Kapur, who was instrumental in winning Massachusetts Democratic Senator John Kerry's support for the agreement, said he was hopeful that both Houses of Congress would soon approve it.

The Indian Express, 21 July 2006

Mole snooped on PMO for nuke secrets: Jaswant

New Delhi, July 20: Former foreign minister Jaswant Singh has alleged that someone in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), during the P V Narasimha Rao-led Congress government, had been leaking nuclear secrets to the US and "we are still being snooped". The Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha said he had come to know about it a decade ago, but had been keeping quiet so far as he did not want to sensationalise the issue. "Yes, there was a person in the PMO. I have evidence, a letter which gives graphic details," Singh told India Today magazine when asked to elaborate on his contention that there was a mole in the PMO of the previous Congress government. He said "the honour of the Prime Minister's Office, to an extent, was at stake. We were snooped, we are still being snooped." He said the letter came to him a decade back. "I do not want to sensationalise it. I did not use it then. I did not use it when in government, I did not bring it up with the US government to tell them look here, this is what you were doing. All governments do try to find what is happening in other countries. Diplomacy requires information."

The Washington Post, 21 July 2006

U.N. Resolution Would Pressure Iran

UNITED NATIONS, July 20: Britain, France and Germany on Thursday introduced a draft U.N. Security Council resolution demanding that Iran stop enriching or reprocessing uranium by next month or face unspecified sanctions. The U.S.-backed resolution calls on states to prevent trade in ballistic missiles and nuclear technology to Iran. It also would require Iran to submit to more intrusive U.N. inspections than are required by the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty. The International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog, would be instructed to report on Iran's compliance with the resolution sometime next month. The move comes a week after the council's five veto-wielding members -- the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain -- and Germany admonished Iran for failing to suspend its uranium-enrichment program or respond to incentives offered by global powers. They unanimously agreed in Paris on July 12 to weigh Security Council sanctions against Iran if it failed to comply with their demands.

The Washington Post, 21 July 2006

U.S., Japan to Start Deploying Missile Interceptors

TOKYO, July 20: The United States and Japan will begin deploying American-made anti-missile systems on Japanese soil next month amid growing concern about North Korean arms, officials announced Thursday. In addition to the deployment of the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 system -- the ballistic missile interceptors known as PAC-3 -- the Pentagon will dispatch 600 specially trained troops from Fort Bliss, Tex., to a U.S. base in southern Japan. The PAC-3 will initially be deployed on American military sites; Japanese officials said they would deploy it on their own Self-Defense Forces bases for the first time by March. A Defense Ministry official said the rollout would begin at Iruma Air Base just west of Tokyo, spreading to three other nearby bases by 2007. Japan intends to keep deploying the system at several more military installations throughout the country through 2010. North Korea's most sophisticated missile -- a Taepodong-2 with an estimated range as far as the continental United States -- failed moments after liftoff during a test this month. The North Koreans successfully test-fired six short- and medium-range missiles, all of them capable of reaching any part of Japan, including U.S. bases here.

The New York Times, 21 July 2006

European Nations Circulate U.N. Iran Draft

UNITED NATIONS: Key European nations circulated a draft U.N. Security Council resolution Thursday that would put the threat of sanctions, but not force, behind demands that Iran suspend uranium enrichment and clear up suspicions about its nuclear program. If Iran does not comply, the draft states, the council will follow up under

Article 41 of Chapter 7 in the U.N. Charter, which allows punishments that do not involve military action, such as economic sanctions, banning air travel or breaking diplomatic relations. The draft, sent to the entire 15-nation council, is the follow-up to a July 12 promise by the foreign ministers of Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the U.S. to send Iran back to the council for not responding to an offer of incentives to suspend enrichment. The draft, proposed by Britain, France, Germany and backed by the U.S., would make mandatory earlier demands from the council and the U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, that Iran stop uranium enrichment. Enriched uranium can be used to produce both nuclear power and weapons, but Iran insists its nuclear program is purely peaceful.

The New York Times, 21 July 2006

Iran Offers a Pledge and a Warning

TEHRAN, July 20: Iran promised again on Thursday to respond to an international package of incentives on Aug. 22 but warned that it would reconsider its position if its case was sent to the United Nations Security Council. The announcement was in a statement issued by Iran's National Security Council. The council is led by Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani. The statement came a week after six countries - Germany and the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United States, France, Britain, China and Russia - decided to seek a United Nations Security Council resolution ordering Iran to freeze some nuclear activities or face sanctions. The six countries offered Iran the incentive package in June in return for a freeze on its uranium enrichment program. "If the path of confrontation is chosen instead of the path of dialogue, and if there is any action to limit the absolute rights of the Iranian people, the Islamic Republic will have no choice but to revise its policy," said the statement, which was carried by the ISNA student news agency.

The Indian Express, 21 July 2006

US Says Iran Witnessed N. Korean Missile Tests

WASHINGTON: The United States said on Thursday Iran had attended North Korean missile tests this month, increasing U.S. concern about ties between two countries Washington accuses of having secret nuclear weapons programmes. No comment on the U.S. charge was immediately available from Iran, which earlier accused Washington of trying to obstruct talks to end a standoff over Tehran's nuclear program. The accusations were traded as the U.N. Security Council wrangled over a resolution to make legally binding demands Iran halt uranium enrichment, a process that can produce fuel for power stations or bomb material. Iran again rejected international calls for it to scrap nuclear fuel production. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Chris Hill said one or more Iranian representatives witnessed July 4 missile tests in North Korea, which experts say is a key partner in Iran's missile programme. Washington says the two have collaborated and has expressed concern cash-strapped Pyongyang could sell missiles and possibly atomic material. Experts say Iran's Shahab 3 missile has a 2,000 km (1,240 miles) range and is based on a North Korean design.

The News, 21 July 2006

F-16 to Pakistan without nuclear warhead carrying capability

WASHINGTON: The F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan wouldn't have nuclear warhead carrying capability and the United States would monitor to avoid leakage of the technology to China or any other country, John Hillen, assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, told a Congressional hearing here. He told the U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee that concerns about leakage of technology from Pakistan were being addressed by "an extraordinary security plan" imposed on the planes and components and accepted by Pakistan's Air Force. "This sale will send a very clear signal of our commitment to a long-term relationship with Pakistan," Hillen told the committee. "We want to build this relationship precisely to help them get better at combating terrorism, Hillen later added. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Boucher has hoped that the Congress will approve the F-16 fighter jets deal. Despite the assurances and safeguards some congressmen expressed reservations about the deal. Lawmakers expressed concerns that the fighter jets' sophisticated technology could fall into the wrong hands.

The New York Times, 21 July 2006

Russia Backs UN Deadline on Iran: Lavrov

MOSCOW: Russia is prepared to back a United Nations resolution giving Iran a deadline to respond to a package of incentives on its nuclear program, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quoted as saying on Thursday. But he did not say if Russia would support imposing sanctions on Iran if it failed to comply -- an issue that has split the U.N. Security Council. Tehran has not responded to a package of commercial and technical incentives that six major

powers submitted to it last month to persuade it to stop enriching uranium. "A lot of time has passed, a lot more than the Iranian president promised our president (Vladimir Putin) in terms of when Iran would give its reply," Lavrov said in an interview published in Kommersant newspaper. "We will be ready to support a resolution which will strengthen the demands of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) with regard to Iran and will ask it for an answer after a particular period," Lavrov said.

Hindustan Times, 22 July 2006

Indo-US nuclear deal Bill introduced in US Senate

Washington: The process for Congressional approval of the Indo-US nuclear deal got underway with the introduction of the enabling legislation in the Senate. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Republican Chairman Richard Lugar had reported the Bill on Friday to the Upper House that would permit resumption of exports of nuclear materials, equipment, and technology to India after 30 years. Lugar's counterpart on the House International Committee, Henry Hyde, is expected to introduce its own version of the enabling legislation before the full House early next week. The House panel had approved a slightly different version of the Bill by an equally huge 37-5 margin. Once approved by the two Houses, the legislation will have to go to a Conference Committee to work out a common language as a Bill cannot become a law until it has been approved in identical form by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Reflecting a common intent, both suggest a two-step vote for the final Congressional approval of the nuclear deal that both agree would become a cornerstone for US-India relations.

The Tribune, 22 July 2006

Draft UN resolution threatens sanctions against Iran

United Nations, July 21: A draft UN resolution threatens to consider sanctions against Iran, if it fails to suspend uranium and plutonium enrichment work at a yet to be decided date in August. But Iran has once again said that it would not reply until August 22 to an offer of commercial and technological incentives if it curbs its nuclear ambitions, which the United States and its allies believe are a cover for bomb making. Tehran threatened to reconsider its nuclear policies presumably a withdrawal from the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), if "the path of confrontation is chosen," according to a statement by Ali Larijani, secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council. The draft resolution, distributed to the 15 UN Security Council members by France, Britain and Germany, has not yet been approved by Russia and China, who earlier submitted amendments that would weaken some of the provisions. No vote has been set and the US Ambassador, John Bolton, said junior diplomats from Germany and the permanent five council members with veto power - the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China - would negotiate further.

The Korean Herald, 22 July 2006

Lee opposes additional sanctions on N. Korea

South Korean Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok has taken another shot at the United States, saying that additional sanctions against North Korea were undesirable. "The solution to the missile problem is for South Korea and the United States to collaborate and for China, Russia and other countries to cooperate," Lee said in a late-night debate show on local television channel MBC on Thursday. "We must think about whether what the United States does immediately equals to what the international community wants to do." Lee's comments are in line with the South Korean government's policy to expand sanctions against the communist regime and avoid creating further tension on the peninsula, government officials later explained. Lee underscored the "South Korean government, as a valid member of the international community must make our own voice known as well." The Seoul government has been visibly cautious against slapping sanctions on North Korea, which test-fired a barrage of ballistic missiles July 5 despite international warnings.

Hindustan Times, 23 July 2006

N-deal most important Bush diplomatic initiative: Panel

Washington: The India-US nuclear deal expected to come up for Congressional approval this week has been hailed by a key panel of the legislature as "perhaps the most important strategic diplomatic initiative" undertaken by the Bush Administration. "With this agreement, the administration is asking Congress to see the opportunities that lie beyond the horizon of the current presidential term," the Senate Foreign Relations Committee headed by Republican Richard Lugar said in a report commending the enabling bill to the upper house. India is already assuming a new role in world affairs, the report said, noting that India's votes at the IAEA on the Iran issue in September 2005 and February 2006 demonstrate that New Delhi is able and willing to adopt a more constructive role on international non-proliferation issues. "India continues to prize its strategic autonomy, but this agreement

will give it increasing incentives to use its influence to bring about international stability and global economic progress," it added, offering a strategic rationale for the deal.

Daily Times, 23 July 2006

I 'pressured' Nawaz to conduct N-tests: Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Saturday that he along with Raja Zafarul Haq and Gohar Ayub pressured then premier Nawaz Sharif to conduct nuclear tests on May 28, 1998. Addressing a religious seminar at a local hotel, Rashid claimed that without their pressure, the Nawaz government would have succumbed to external pressure.

Daily Times, 23 July 2006

Balochistan not consulted on N-tests in Chagai, says Mengal

QUETTA: The provincial government in Balochistan was not consulted in 1998 when the nuclear tests were conducted in Chagai district on May 28, said former Balochistan chief minister Sardar Akhtar Mengal. Talking to Daily Times on Saturday, he said the provincial government was completely kept in the dark by the army and the federal government about their decision to choose a district of the province for conducting underground nuclear tests. "The mobilisation of the army did give us the clue that something was about to happen. But the provincial government was never apprised about such plans that the Baloch territory was going to be used for nuclear tests. It was a decision taken by the army. Even the prime minister had little knowledge about the developments during the time," he said, adding that if the provincial government knew about the government's plans, it would never have allowed the tests to take place in Balochistan.

The Indian Express, 23 July 2006

At G8, Bush & Putin unveil joint N-plans

ST PETERSBURG, July 15: The US and Russia announced today moves to avert nuclear terrorism and halt the spread of atomic weapons as they sought to give a boost to a summit. US President George Bush and Russia's Vladimir Putin unveiled the initiatives before other Group of Eight leaders arrived for a summit that will be challenged by violence in West Asia, Iran's nuclear ambitions and global trade worries. Referring to each other by their first names, Bush was at pains to protect Putin from his own administration's charges that the Kremlin leader was backsliding on democracy. "I fully understand ... that there will be a Russian-style democracy. I don't expect Russia to look like the United States. As Vladimir pointedly reminded me last night, they have a different history, different traditions," he said. "We of course don't want to have a democracy like the one in Iraq, to be honest," said Putin, a former KGB spy known for his dry sense of humour, after Bush cited Iraq as a country where the US is promoting democratic freedoms.

Dawn, 23 July 2006

Russia calls for softening of Iran draft resolution

VIENNA, July 22: Unexpected Russian opposition to key parts of a U.S.-backed Security Council draft resolution is threatening international unity on how to deal with Tehran's nuclear defiance, U.N. diplomats said on Saturday. Particularly vexing to the United States and its allies is Moscow's refusal to endorse language that would demand Tehran freeze uranium enrichment or face potential sanctions. Russia had signalled that it was ready to support a tougher line. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov delivered a veiled warning to Tehran on enrichment and its refusal to respond to an international offer to negotiate its nuclear program as recently as July 12, warning that the Security Council 'will consider steps appropriate to the situation,' unless the Islamic republic complied. He and counterparts from the United States, China, Britain, France and Germany agreed on July 12 to resume Security Council deliberations after Tehran refused requests to respond by that date to an international package of incentives meant to persuade Iran to freeze enrichment and make other nuclear concessions.

The Washington Post, 24 July 2006

Pakistan Expanding Nuclear Program

Pakistan has begun building what independent analysts say is a powerful new reactor for producing plutonium, a move that, if verified, would signal a major expansion of the country's nuclear weapons capabilities and a potential new escalation in the region's arms race. Satellite photos of Pakistan's Khushab nuclear site show what appears to be a partially completed heavy-water reactor capable of producing enough plutonium for 40 to 50 nuclear weapons a year, a 20-fold increase from Pakistan's current capabilities, according to a technical assessment by Washington-based nuclear experts. The construction site is adjacent to Pakistan's only plutonium production reactor, a modest,

50-megawatt unit that began operating in 1998. By contrast, the dimensions of the new reactor suggest a capacity of 1,000 megawatts or more, according to the analysis by the Institute for Science and International Security. Pakistan is believed to have 30 to 50 uranium warheads, which tend to be heavier and more difficult than plutonium warheads to mount on missiles.

Hindustan Times, 24 July 2006

Nuke deal goes before US House

Washington, July 23: The stage is set for the first floor debate and vote on the Indo-US nuclear deal in the US Congress this week. In preparation, the chiefs of the House and Senate panels -- which had passed their respective bills with an overwhelming majority -- have reported the bills to the two chambers. But even as the deal is called a major diplomatic initiative of the Bush administration, concerns have been raised on Capitol Hill about India's breeder-reactor programme. Though the date is yet to be notified, the House is slated to vote this week. The Senate will take up the bill when it reconvenes in September. In his report, House International Relations Committee chairman Henry Hyde said it was in the US's security interest to deepen its relationship with India. Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Richard Lugar too welcomed the nuclear deal as "perhaps the most important strategic diplomatic initiative" of the Bush administration.

The Times of India, 24 July 2006

PM not keeping N-deal vows: Karat

NEW DELHI: A day before monsoon session begins, CPM general secretary Prakash Karat widened the scope of opposition to Indo-US nuclear deal by issuing a detailed stand on how the promises made by PM Manmohan Singh in Parliament on the deal are being "changed and eroded" by both Houses of the US Congress. Karat sent the party's response to all political parties showing how specific promises made by PM in Parliament are being changed by US. He wants Parliament to take a view on this. "It is not a party issue. Our view would be subscribed by many parties and scientific community. Let all parties have common understanding in Parliament on the subject. No government can go ahead if Parliament is opposed," he said, adding that though constitutionally international agreements need not be ratified by Parliament; there are precedents like US aggression in Iraq and the CTBT treaty when Parliament took a view. Karat said it is still time for government to say no to the changes being made by US Congress. "It is still time for the trap to be closed," he said.

The Times of India, 24 July 2006

US concerned over India's breeder programme

WASHINGTON: A key panel of the US Congress has commended the India-US nuclear deal to the Senate, while expressing a few concerns over its breeder reactor programme and hoping that New Delhi will place them under IAEA safeguards in future. India's nuclear plans highlight the need for stringent security regarding all fissile material, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee headed by Republican Richard Lugar said in a report on the enabling bill introduced by him in the upper House on Thursday. Urging the administration to share best practices in this regard with India, the panel said it had worked to ensure that the India agreement does not undercut US compliance with its responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and it believed that its bill achieves a proper balance. It will help solidify New Delhi's commitments to implement strong export controls, separate its civilian nuclear infrastructure from its weapons programme and place civilian facilities under IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards, the report said.

Daily Times, 24 July 2006

Iran warns UN against tough nuclear decision

TEHRAN: Iran warned on Sunday that it would retaliate to any UN Security Council resolution ordering it to stop sensitive nuclear work. "Any harsh measures will face a proportionate reaction," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters. "If the other side chooses anything but the path of negotiations, our attitude will change accordingly," he added, without elaborating on how Tehran could retaliate. The warning came as a draft resolution was being circulated in the Security Council which would legally require Iran to suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, at the centre of fears the country could acquire nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, Iran has asked Switzerland to organise an international conference to resolve its stand-off with the West over its nuclear programme, a Swiss newspaper reported on Sunday. A Swiss Foreign Ministry spokesman declined to comment on the report in the NZZ am Sonntag. There was no immediate reaction from Tehran.

Daily Times, 24 July 2006

No nuclear help from Pakistan

NEW DELHI: Iran's foreign minister said his country does not want nuclear weapons and that it received no help from Pakistan or its nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan in its atomic programme, according to a TV interview broadcast on Sunday. Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki's comments to New Delhi Television contradict Pakistan's repeated assertions that Khan sold centrifuges to Iran to produce weapons-grade uranium. "Our nuclear technology is local and national. This is produced in Iran by our scientists, most of them young scientists," Mottaki said in the interview. When asked by the interviewer if Iran had ever had any help from Pakistan or Khan's network, he shook his head in silent denial. In February 2004, Khan publicly confessed that he sold nuclear technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea between 1989 and 2000, although he insisted he did so without the government's knowledge. Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf later pardoned Khan, considered the country's nuclear pioneer, and Islamabad refused to hand him over to the United States or the UN nuclear watchdog agency for questioning.

The New York Times, 24 July 2006

A Test of Friendship for India's Leader

NEW DELHI, July 23: Manmohan Singh, the prime minister of India and an ever-more-important friend of the United States government, is poised to face a storm of criticism this week when Parliament returns for the aptly named monsoon session. Much of the criticism, it seems, implicates his friendship with the United States. Mr. Singh, an avowed economic reformist who has made nuclear partnership with the United States a central element of his policy agenda, is likely to face a beating over at least three issues - terrorism, economic liberalization and nuclear bargaining - all bearing consequences for India's relationship with the United States. In fact, the budding friendship is complicated precisely by the messiness of democracy. "I wouldn't like to be in his shoes," said K. Subrahmanyam, the chairman of the government's Task Force on Global Strategic Development. First, even as Mr. Singh has secured a groundbreaking initial nod from the United States Congress on acquiring civilian nuclear technology, the negotiations have lately tripped over several hurdles involving the required American legislation, leading the government's critics to pounce.

The New York Times, 24 July 2006

Loose Nukes

President Bush and President Vladimir Putin of Russia announced two new nuclear initiatives earlier this month that could make the world safer - if the presidents keep prodding their secretive and change-averse nuclear bureaucracies to follow through. On that score, unfortunately, the record is not great. Declaring nuclear terrorism one of the biggest threats facing the world today, Mr. Bush and Mr. Putin began a new coalition of the willing that will share intelligence, develop better ways of securing bomb-making materials and train for the all too imaginable day when a terrorist makes off with a suitcase of plutonium or highly enriched uranium. Any effort that requires governments to look harder at how they are protecting nuclear materials is a good idea. That is true whether a country has tons of plutonium stored at nuclear fuel plants or a few kilos of highly enriched uranium, which can still be found in scores of poorly guarded research reactors around the world. The new group should develop a set of security standards for all nuclear facilities. And Mr. Bush and Mr. Putin should set the pace by being the first to sign on.

The Hindu, 24 July 2006

Power games in East Asia

The United Nations resolution against North Korea, unanimously adopted by the Security Council in New York on July 15, is strong on diplomatic language but weak in political impact. And thereby hangs an East Asian tale of new big-power equations. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), better known as North Korea, test-fired a stream of seven missiles in the early hours of July 5. The routine military exercise, as North Korea later described the event, coincided with the Independence Day celebrations in the United States. Not a surprise, as the complex and often hostile relations between Washington and Pyongyang can be traced to the Korean War of the early 1950s. And, for over a decade now, the U.S., active as the high priest of non-proliferation, has insisted that the DPRK cannot arm itself with the atom bomb as also missiles and other means of delivering any category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The U.S. and Japan, detecting and monitoring North Korea's July 5 missile experiment, said the effort was unsuccessful, particularly the flight-test of an intercontinental ballistic missile. Known as Taepodong-2, this missile was thought to have been designed to hit U.S. targets and threaten Japan as well. North Korea claimed on July 6 that the new missile exercises had strengthened its deterrence against the U.S.

Daily Yomiuri, 24 July 2006

Ratchet up pressure on North Korea

North Korea's development of missiles and nuclear technology are major threats to Japan. Every possible step to remove the threats should be taken. The government has begun preparations for imposing financial sanctions on North Korea, which would follow the initial sanctions, which included the barring of the Man Gyong Bong-92 cargo and passenger ferry from Japanese ports for six months. One of the financial sanctions will be to identify corporations and individuals related to Pyongyang's development of missiles and weapons of mass destruction and publish the blacklist in a government gazette. Another will be to block remittances to the corporations and individuals in question overseas and freeze any funds they may have in Japan. Under the resolution adopted in reaction to North Korea's missile launches earlier this month, which was passed by unanimous vote at the U.N. Security Council on July 15, all U.N. member states are required to prevent any transfer of financial assets that would contribute to Pyongyang's development of missiles and WMDs.

The Tribune, 25 July 2006

Jaswant gives mole's name to PM

New Delhi, July 24: Former External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh is believed to have forwarded to the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh the name of a 'mole' in the PMO who he alleged had leaked India's nuclear test plans to the USA, a day after latter had dared him to name the person. Party sources said Mr Jaswant Singh had forwarded the letter purportedly written by a US diplomat to a Senator, with a reference to the 'mole' in the PMO during P V Narasimha Rao's tenure. 'He (Jaswant Singh) has told us that he will be sending the letter to the Prime Minister without deleting any names. By now, he must have forwarded the letter,' BJP Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha Sushma Swaraj said. The Prime Minister had yesterday rubbished Singh's claims and said, 'if he (Jaswant) has the decency and courage, he should name the person whom he is accusing of being a mole. We are not afraid of any debate on any issue'. The BJP leader, on his part, expressed disappointment with the phraseology the Prime Minister chose to use 'in challenging decency.'

The Hindu, 25 July 2006

Pakistan downplays nuclear report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Foreign Ministry on Monday declined to comment on specific programmes at the Khushab nuclear weapons facility but did not deny a Washington Post report that it was expanding the facility. "What [the report] basically says is that Pakistan has a nuclear weapons programme and a nuclear facility in Khushab. This ought to be no revelation to anyone, because Pakistan is a nuclear weapons state. I have no specific comments on Pakistan's facilities, the details of the facilities and programmes in the centre," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said at a briefing. Ms. Aslam confirmed that the facility at Khushab was not under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Downplaying the Post report, the spokesperson said she did not know "what was the need for this article" when the Khushab facility was a well-known nuclear weapons facility, and as the report also acknowledged as much. "Its co-ordinates are exchanged even with India under the 1988 agreement about ongoing nuclear facilities and installations," she said. Khushab is 100 km north of Faisalabad in Punjab province.

The Tribune, 26 July 2006

India signs convention on nuclear terror

United Nations, July 25: India has signed an international convention requiring states to make punishable as serious offence under their domestic law, terrorist acts involving use of nuclear material. The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, initially proposed by the Russian Federation, was adopted by the UN General Assembly on April 13, 2005, by a consensus and was opened for signature at the UN Headquarters from September 14, 2005. It requires States to make punishable as serious offence under their domestic law, terrorist acts involving the use of nuclear material. States are also required to cooperate in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of these offences through information sharing, extradition and mutual legal assistance. Indian Ambassador to the United Nirupam Sen signed the documents at a brief formal ceremony yesterday.

The Tribune, 26 July 2006

Bush knew of Pak N-reactor plan

Washington: The Bush administration on Monday acknowledged it had long known about Pakistan's plans to develop a large plutonium production reactor and urged Pakistan not to expand its nuclear weapons programme. The Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) reported on Monday that Pakistan is building a second heavy water production reactor inside the Khushab complex that could enable the production of

up to 50 nuclear weapons a year. The reactor 'could produce over 200 kilograms of weapon-grade plutonium per year, assuming it operates at full power for a modest 220 days per year. At 4-5 kilograms of plutonium per weapon, this stock would allow the production of over 40-50 nuclear weapons a year. The reactor could also be used to produce substantial amounts of tritium for boosted fission weapons,' authors David Albright and Paul Brannan wrote. White House spokesman Tony Snow, responding to the claims, said the Bush administration continues to 'discourage the expansion and modernization of nuclear weapons programs, both of India and Pakistan.' He said the U.S. supported a fissile material cutoff treaty that it has introduced at the U.N. Conference on Disarmament, and 'we're continuing on all the states that produce fissile material to observe a voluntary production moratorium, as we have in the United States for a very long time.'

Dawn, 26 July 2006

N-plan is defensive, says Delhi

NEW DELHI, July 25: India's nuclear weapons are only for defence and will never be used in a first strike or against a non-nuclear state, the defence minister said ahead of a vote by US lawmakers on a landmark deal to share nuclear fuel and technology with New Delhi. The US House of Representatives is to vote on Wednesday on the nuclear deal, signed last year by US President George Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The plan has already been endorsed by two crucial congressional panels. 'Our nuclear doctrine affirms that India will not resort to (a) first strike and never use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states,' Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said in a speech on Monday night in New Delhi. "India's nuclear doctrine has a purely defensive orientation." The House of Representatives vote is part of a drawn-out legislative process to ratify the deal, which also has to be cleared by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an assembly of nations that export nuclear material.

The Asian Age, 27 July 2006

Nuclear deal is without techno-economic merit

As always, it is the Americans themselves who reveal the nitty-gritty of the bargains they strike, confident that this will in no way harm the US getting its way. Ashley J. Tellis, the Washington security specialist whose services have been extensively utilised by the George W. Bush administration in forging the nuclear deal with India, has confessed that the Congress Party government has given "more" to make it possible in contrast to the Vajpayee government, which "gave nothing in return." What this "more" is, is no secret - a nuclear de-fanged India. The BJP external affairs minister Jaswant Singh in his memoirs - Call to Honour: In Service of Emergent India - discloses this as the end-state his "strategic dialogue" partner, the US deputy secretary Strobe Talbott, was after. The Vajpayee government, however, decided against signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty directly or via the backdoor, as this deal attempts to do, by making the "voluntary" test moratorium a legally binding commitment, which would restrict the Indian arsenal to the only proven and reliable armament in the Indian inventory - the 20 kiloton "firecracker," or getting hustled into joining a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty that would ensure the Indian deterrent remained forever small-sized. It is on these two counts, contained in the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement, as Tellis has confirmed, that the Manmohan Singh regime compromised. The grievous flaws are then in the basic document itself as much with the conditionalities inserted especially in the Senate version of the amended draft US law, which has yet to be voted on.

Hindustan Times, 27 July 2006

Lantos nearly killed nuke deal bill with Iran rider

Washington: Senior lawmaker Tom Lantos is as passionate in his support to India as in his antagonism for Iran. The two dispositions come into periodic conflict. It was the same on Wednesday when one saw the co-author of the nuclear deal legislation momentarily join the ranks of the bill's foremost critic, Massachusetts Democrat Edward Markey. Indian supporters watching the proceedings of the House of Representatives held their breath as Lantos came out in support of Markey's motion to add a new paragraph virtually making the deal conditional on India's 'full and active' participation in US efforts to dissuade, isolate and possibly sanction Iran for its nuclear push. As it turned out, the motion came fairly close to being carried, mustering 192 votes in favour and 235 against. If it had been carried, it could have been a deal-breaker, with India unlikely to countenance the attaching of such an extraneous condition. Lantos has upped the ante on Iran several times in the past. At the very first hearing of the House International Relations Committee last September, he virtually slapped a notice on India for not having decided to vote with the US to refer the Iran nuclear issue to the UN Security Council. Once India came round, Lantos became the most avid supporter of the deal.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2006

US conditions? Look what Pak has had to swallow for its F-16 supplies

NEW DELHI, JULY 27: Exactly a week ago, when the CPM and the BJP began raising, in concert, the bogey of an 'Indian sellout' on the nuclear deal, they may have overlooked another hearing on Capitol Hill: the imposition of unprecedented conditions on Pakistan for the sale of F-16s. These include a sweeping set of terms from US presence in F-16 bases to mandatory permission from the US before F-16s are used in operations involving another country and disabling technology that helps offensive action. In stark contrast, the Indo-US nuclear cooperation Bill that was passed with a handsome bipartisan majority in the US House of Representatives today brings no additional burden on New Delhi than what was agreed on July 18 last year. The reporting requirements are all an affair between the Executive and the Legislature in Washington.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2006

'Pak has 25 to 50 modest nukes'

New York, July 27: Pakistan currently has between 25 and 50 nuclear weapons, mostly relatively simple uranium arms with "modest" yields' around the size of the bombs used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the journal Nature claimed on Thursday. The claim followed media reports that satellite photos of Pakistan's Khushab nuclear site have shown what appears to be a partially completed heavy-water reactor capable of a 20-fold increase from its current nuclear capabilities. Quoting John Pike, director of globalsecurity.org, a nonprofit group that specialises in image analysis, Nature says if the new facility is what it seems to be, it would allow Pakistan to build a lot more bombs. The reactor is 'gigantic' and would allow Pakistan to increase its total number of weapons tenfold, Pike says. Plutonium can be used to construct smaller and more lightweight weapons than uranium. Most uranium bombs require 15 to 20 kg of material, but plutonium weapons can be built with as little as 5 kg. In addition, small plutonium bombs are often used to trigger larger hydrogen weapons. So the technology, says Pike, is an important step towards developing those bombs, which are thousands of times more powerful than uranium and plutonium weapons.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2006

Nuclear deal wins Washington as it continues to battle New Delhi

Washington, July 27: Surprising even many of the Indian supporters and those in the State Department, the House of Representatives last night passed the civilian nuclear agreement between India and the United States with an overwhelming majority. After over four hours of marathon debate on the path-breaking agreement inked about an year ago when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, visited here, as many as 359 Congressmen voted in favour of the bill (No. 5682), while the opposition was restricted to just 68 lawmakers. The vote is a quick, major victory for the Bush administration, which argued that nurturing India as an ally outweighed critics' concerns that the agreement would free more nuclear material for India to use for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Until the vote on Wednesday evening, American law had prohibited nuclear cooperation with any of the three states that have refused to sign the nonproliferation treaty: India, Pakistan and Israel. Several leading Democrats, including Representative Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, argued in favor of the deal, which was supported by both the India-American lobby and the nuclear industry.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2006

PM Rao's govt was leaking secrets: Jaswant

New Delhi, July 28: Senior BJP leader Jaswant Singh has claimed the P V Narasimha Rao regime knew of a US mole in the PMO and challenged the government to take legal action against him for not naming the spy. The former external affairs minister also alleged Rao's government was somehow involved in leaking secrets about the country's nuclear programme. "Government had the information because it was the government that was leaking (nuclear secrets)," he said in an interview, when asked why he had not disclosed the information about the mole when he came to know of it over a decade ago. He insisted the spy he has referred to in his book A Call To Honour was part and parcel of the government. "How do you separate someone from the government?" he asked. Singh, who insisted he was under no obligation to share information about the spy with anybody, challenged the government to charge him for not making the identity of the mole public. "If I can be charged, why does the government not charge me?" he asked when referred to his former BJP leader Ram Jethmalani's remarks that his silence on the issue was a criminal offence.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2006

House warming

The expansive support - more than three-fourths in a chamber of 435 - to the Indo-US nuclear deal from the House

of Representatives in Washington surprised both the pros and the antis. The two biggest pros, the Bush administration that has put its domestic political capital on the line and the UPA government battling domestic critiques, have good reason to be pleased. The vote reflects the new bipartisan consensus in the US in favour of a deeper relationship with India and sets the tone for the more demanding debate in the Senate, the upper house of the US Congress. The non-proliferation lobby in Washington backed by a section of liberal Democrats hadn't given up till the very end. A number of killer amendments, including one that demanded a certification from the president on Indian cooperation to isolate and sanction Iran and another that sought to constrain the production of material for nuclear weapons, were debated. Their defeat by handsome margins should tell our MPs that many objections being articulated by lawmakers here have been addressed and defeated by the US lower house.

The Indian Express, 28 July 2006

'Nuclear India in America's interest'

George W Bush Washington, July 28: Lauding the House of Representatives on the passage of legislation providing New Delhi greater access to civilian nuclear technology, President George W Bush has said the development of nuclear power in India would benefit America. "I want to applaud the House of Representatives for passing an important piece of legislation when it comes to America's relationship with India," Bush said and urged the Senate to do so as well. The President said, "It's in the interest of our country that India and China develop nuclear power. In the global energy market, when demand for hydrocarbons goes up in energy. It affects your gasoline prices. And therefore, the more we can help these countries develop technology, the more we can help them develop a civilian nuclear industry that is safe, the better off it is for American consumers." Bush said the expansion of the nuclear power industry in the country was one way of staying competitive in the 21st century. "We have got to be wise--we have got to push hard to build new plants. And the energy bill I signed last year is--it's a good step forward. This government is going to spend a lot of money on fast breeder reactor technology," Bush told the National Association of Manufacturers.

The Hindu, 28 July 2006

Let us wait for the end product: Manmohan

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday said if the United States' legislative process leads to an "end product which is not consistent" with the parameters of the July 18 civilian nuclear agreement that would be a "determining factor" on "what we can do with it". "We have made very straight representations to the U.S. Government. Let that [legislative] process be completed. I will come before this House, if there is any departure from what I have said. Then, the country, as a whole, will have the full opportunity to make up its mind," he said in the Rajya Sabha during Question Hour. Dr. Singh was responding to the concern expressed by Sitaram Yechury (Communist Party of India - Marxist) that the Bill passed by the House of Representatives stipulated that India has to first negotiate its agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) before passing the final agreement for transfer of civilian nuclear technology to India. This stipulation violated the suo motu assurance given earlier by the Prime Minister that "before voluntarily placing the civilian facilities under the IAEA safeguards, we will ensure that all restrictions on India have been lifted," Mr. Yechury said. The Prime Minister admitted that the Bills before the committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate contained elements that "are of concern to us." However, the U.S. Government had to ensure that "what is contemplated [by the U.S. lawmakers] is within the parameters of the July 18 statement."

The Hindu, 28 July 2006

U.S. House votes for nuclear deal

Washington: The United States House of Representatives on Thursday overwhelmingly voted for a legislation providing greater access of sensitive nuclear technology to India after defeating potential deal breaker amendments. The legislation, cleared by the 435-member House by a 359-68 vote nearly four hours after taking it up for debate, must now be approved by the Senate before being signed into law by President George Bush. The approval of the United States and India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act of 2006 by the House handed a major victory to Mr. Bush's foreign policy initiative and was described by many lawmakers as a cornerstone of the new strategic partnership between the two countries. Besides the Senate, the deal, which was reached during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the U.S. in July 2005, needs the clearance from the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an assembly of nations that export nuclear material. Last month, the pact was approved by two key Congressional panels.

The Hindu, 28 July 2006

U.S. House rejects six amendments

Washington: Democratic Congressman Tom Lantos, a staunch supporter of the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal, said in the House of Representatives on Thursday that it was a landmark pact. Participating in the debate he said it would be a "tidal shift in relations between India and the United States" and lead to a "new era of mutual respect and cooperation." However, critics of the deal say it could boost India's nuclear arsenal and send the wrong message to countries like Iran, whose nuclear ambitions are opposed by the U.S. "By shipping India fuel for its civilian reactors, this legislation potentially frees up their [India's] entire supply of domestic uranium for use in weapons," House Democrat Ed Markey said before the vote. Under the deal, finalised during U.S. President George Bush's landmark visit to India in March this year, the U.S. will allow civilian nuclear trade with India in return for safeguards and inspections at New Delhi's 14 civilian nuclear plants but its eight military plants will be off-limits. In the course of leading up to the final vote, the House considered as many as six amendments, three of which were disposed of by voice votes and three others by recorded votes.

Hindustan Times, 28 July 2006

LeT may target atomic energy installation: NSA

New Delhi, July: Government has information that one of the atomic energy installations could be targeted by Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), National Security Adviser MK Narayanan said on Friday terming it a "very serious threat". "There is information that may be one of our atomic energy installations could be the target," he said in an interview to a private TV channel. Asked whether there was any information about individuals who could be picking up the targets, Narayanan said, "It's LeT operation...It is a very serious threat". "I think I may be ex-communicated after this. I may not be given information but since you asked me, this is enough for us for more than providing proof to anyone," he said adding, "I would like to be able to prevent this and get the module that is responsible." Asked about BJP leader Jaswant Singh's claim about a 'mole' in the PMO during PV Narasimha Rao's regime, leaking nuclear secrets to the US, the NSA contended that what Singh has done has trivialised an issue of great importance.

Hindustan Times, 28 July 2006

China to help Pakistan build six N-power stations

Islamabad: China has announced that it would help Pakistan build six 300-megawatt nuclear power stations, news agencies said quoting a story in China Daily published on Thursday. The deal had apparently been finalised when President Pervez Musharraf met the Chinese leaders in June, even as Pakistan continued to press the US for an equal treatment with India on the nuclear energy issue. This is a part of ongoing cooperation between the two countries to develop their energy resources. China now has 11 nuclear power stations with a total capacity of 8,700 megawatts, The News reported. According to a national plan provided in 2004, China will build 40 more nuclear power units by 2020 to meet its growing energy requirements, the report from Beijing said.

Hindustan Times, 28 July 2006

Pro-India coalition asks Senate to approve N-deal

Washington: The US-India Business Council (USIBC) and the Coalition for Partnership with India have applauded the approval of the legislation on the Indo-US nuclear deal by the House of Representatives and urged the Senate to give it a similar resounding vote. "The Act catalyses the convergence of the world's two great democracies for the 21st century to strengthen non-proliferation, democracy, economic development and military cooperation," said Ron Somers, president of USIBC. "USIBC looks forward to a similar resounding vote of confidence in the bill and the US-India strategic partnership in the US Senate in the coming weeks," he added. The civilian nuclear boycott of India by the US for the over three decades has kept the countries estranged across a wide spectrum of pivotal bilateral issues, said the Coalition, an association comprising American businesses, academic institutions, associations, think-tanks, and like-minded individuals supporting a deeper strategic partnership with India. The India nuclear bill, if passed by the Senate, will mark the end of this unfortunate estrangement, said the body which was formed as a support group to further Indo-US relationship embodied in the July 18, 2005, Joint Statement signed by President George W Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, including the sharing of civilian nuclear technology with India.

The Hindu, 28 July 2006

Questions arise on reprocessing restrictions

Even as the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday night passed a bill authorising nuclear exports to India under a specific set of conditions, fresh doubts have surfaced about the extent to which the Bush administration

intends to fulfil its side of the bargain struck with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last July. Under the U.S. Atomic Energy Act of 1954, Sections 128 and 129 prohibit nuclear sales to countries that fall foul of a number of conditions. These include agreeing to place all nuclear facilities under international safeguards [128], not testing a nuclear weapon [129 (a)(1)(A)], not abrogating or violating IAEA safeguards [129(a)(1)(B) and (C)], not possessing nuclear weapons [129(a)(1)(D)], and not exporting reprocessing equipment and technology to a non-nuclear weapons state except as part of an international programme which the U.S. is a part of or approves of [129 (a)(2)(C)]. The original draft Bill seeking to amend the AEA to allow nuclear sales to India - shared with New Delhi in March and submitted to Congress - envisaged the waiving of Sections 128 and 129 in their entirety. But in the version passed by the House on Wednesday and due to be passed by the Senate, the exemptions have been limited only to Section 128 and to the single clause of Section 129 which prohibits a recipient state from engaging in a nuclear weapons programme. Tests prior to July 18, 2005, are exempted but not subsequent ones.

Hindustan Times, 29 July 2006

US Senator for trade curbs on India

Washington: The head of the powerful Senate Finance Committee has said the United States should not extend preferential trade treatment to India and Brazil, which he accused of blocking a move to liberalise the World Trade Organisation. Republican Senator Charles Grassley told reporters, "Countries that don't want to give us access to their markets in the WTO negotiations, why should we continue to give them preferential treatment?" He said he was sure upcoming US preferences were "not going to involve Brazil and India." Brazil and India receive large benefits from a US Trade preference programme that allows dozens of developing countries to export thousands of products duty-free to the United States. The preference programme expires at the end of the year. Congress must act on its renewal, and Grassley's committee would play a pivotal role in shaping the legislation. Last month, Grassley expressed impatience "with countries that are developing just fine but want to be able to hang onto the (trade preference programme) to avoid tough negotiations."

The Asian Age, 29 July 2006

A Bad Deal Now Worse

The nuclear deal with India represents a strategic bonanza for the United States. It is thus hardly a surprise that the enabling legislation, with its preconditions and good-behaviour clauses on India, sailed through the House of Representatives. The saga, however, is far from over: it will be months more before we know whether all the pieces have fallen in place and the vaunted deal can take effect. Yet the US has continued to reap the dividends ever since signing a deal whose terms it has fundamentally altered through its legislative process. The deal's future may still be unclear but not America's intent. It has pounced on the opportunity to influence India's policy and actions. From the immediate neighbourhood to global issues, Indian foreign policy has never looked more acquiescent to US interests than today. The Prime Minister's conspicuous silence on America's rearming of terrorist-haven Pakistan is as telling as his midnight decision last September to vote against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Not content with its sale of P-3C Orions, C-130s, TOW missiles, Aerostat surveillance radars, 155mm self-propelled howitzers and Phalanx systems to Islamabad, the US has in recent weeks announced major new weapon transfers, using as a cover the contrived elation in India over the nuclear deal's legislative advance. It first announced the sale of Harpoon anti-ship missiles and then unveiled its largest-ever arms package for Pakistan - a \$5.1 billion deal that includes satellite-guided bombs, advanced targeting systems and 36 F-16C/D Block 50/52 Falcon fighters.

The Statesman, 29 July 2006

Nuke sites on Lashkar radar

NEW DELHI, July 28: Indian security and nuclear installations are under 'very serious threat' from Pakistan-based militant outfit Lashkar-e-Taiyaba which may be planning a 'major assault', National Security Adviser Mr MK Narayanan said today. 'At the moment, we have at least two or three serious threats... there is information that may be one of our atomic installations could be the target,' he said in an interview to a TV channel. Asked whether there was any information about individuals who could be picking up the targets, Mr Narayanan said 'it's LeT operation... it is a very serious threat.' He said LeT was a far greater threat than Al-Qaida due to its greater reach. 'LeT is an integral part of Al-Qaida but sometimes it becomes even bigger because of its contacts. We have not come across their involvement in the US but in Europe and Asia, they are very active'. 'I think I may be ex-communicated after this. I may not be given information but since you asked me, this is enough for us for more than providing proof to anyone,' he said adding 'I would like to be able to prevent this and get the module that is responsible'.

The Tribune, 29 July 2006

Left opposes PM's statement on N-deal

New Delhi, July 28: Left parties today categorically stated that the suo motu statement by the Prime Minister on the Indo-US nuclear deal was not acceptable to them, but mellowed down on pressing for a resolution to set the parameters for the Manmohan Singh government to act with Washington to finalise the cooperation agreement. 'Left parties urge the government to realise that this is an issue of vital national importance and the opinion of Parliament needs to be clearly spelt out now which cannot be done simply through a suo motu statement,' a joint statement by the four Left parties, which prop up the Congress-led coalition from outside, said. It said Parliament should discuss the matter so that the sense of the House was expressed whereby the parameters of the agreement could be defined to counter any pressures and changes sought to be brought about. 'This matter cannot wait till the legislation is finally adopted in the US Congress,' it said, suggesting the urgency in the matter. CPM politburo member Sitaram Yechury told reporters that 'we are in discussion with the government and political parties. As to what form the sense of the House will be reflected, is being discussed.' The CPI had yesterday ruled out a resolution on the issue, saying that it would be 'politically imprudent' to join hands with the BJP on the issue.

The Indian Express, 29 July 2006

White House to Hill: Delink n-deal from India-Iran ties

NEW DELHI, JULY 28:As the Left and Right here object to the prospect of the US shifting the nuclear goalposts, the Bush Administration has underlined its own interests in resisting any attempt by the American Congress to reframe the bilateral nuclear agreement with India. While it welcomed the forward movement of the nuclear legislation in the US Congress this week, the Administration has also emphasised that it 'would oppose any amendment that would require renegotiation of what was agreed to in the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement' signed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W Bush. As Singh suggested the other day, the real nuclear debate, for now, is not between New Delhi and Washington. The UPA government will need to join the issue only after it sees the final piece of legislation that comes out of the meatgrinder of the American political process. Meanwhile, irrespective of the Indian concerns, the Bush Administration has made it clear to the US Congress that it will not cede its constitutional prerogative to conduct foreign policy. 'The Administration would oppose any amendment conditioning cooperation with India upon India's policies towards Iran, which would be beyond the scope of our July 2005 commitments', the Office of Management and Budget said in a statement released in Washington on Wednesday.

Hindustan Times, 29 July 2006

'Nuclear agreement with India bad for America'

Washington: The New York Times has said that the Indo-US nuclear deal was "a bad deal" for America, but the US Congress is unlikely to fix it with "so much pro-India lobbying money sloshing around up there." "Many on Capitol Hill had complained in 2005 that the Bush administration was taken to the cleaners when it negotiated a nuclear cooperation deal with India," the daily said in an editorial on Friday. "But with so much pro-India lobbying money sloshing around up there, hopes are fast fading that Congress will do anything to fix it," it said, adding that "an army of lobbyists earned their keep this week when the House overwhelmingly approved the deal with minimal restrictions". Bringing the world's most populous democracy - and 12th largest economy - in from the nuclear cold isn't necessarily a bad idea, but the problem is that the US got very little for it, the paper said. "No Indian promise to stop producing bomb-making material. No promise not to expand its arsenal. And no binding promise not to resume nuclear testing - the White House won't promise that either," it said.

Hindustan Times, 29 July 2006

How the Left learnt to love our bombs

Remember a time when you associated communists, at least of the internationalist variety like those in India, with being against nuclear weapons. Well, the times have changed and today's comrades are as keen as any other nukophile that India gets to do what it wants in the nuclear department without being made to sign any rules by outsiders. We would have welcomed the New Left with open arms and commended them on their newfound common sense were it not for one snag - India's communists are still a bit confused about its stand on a nuclear India. Luckily for them, however, the confusion is made to hide behind a show of concern. "Aren't we being suckered by that hegemon and being made to fritter away our sovereignty in the matters of defence by jumping into the Indo-US deal" they seem to be asking, perhaps sincerely believing that apart from themselves, the rest of India's political class harbours a great masochistic desire to be forever at Washington's beck and call. In Parliament, the Left showed its extreme worry about GoI selling the country for the proverbial 30 pieces of silver if the latter did not negotiate its agreement with the IAEA before the final agreement for transfer of civilian technology was passed.

Thus, with furrowed brow, the communists wanted the Prime Minister to make a statement or draft 'subscribed by all sides'. Fortunately, the PM pointed out that only the final outcome of the US legislation in September can elicit an Indian reaction.

The Hindu, 29 July 2006

Russia as energy superpower

Russia has drawn up plans to build up to 100 nuclear reactors over the next 25 years in an effort to reduce dependence on hydrocarbons and consolidate its position as the world's energy superpower. Under an ambitious programme of expansion till 2030, it will build 40 nuclear reactors inside the country to more than double the nuclear generation capacity. Another 40 to 60 reactors are to be constructed for other countries as Moscow seeks to increase its share of the global nuclear market. Russia has the world's largest energy reserves, accounting for 13 per cent of proven oil finds, 34 per cent of natural gas, and a quarter of all coals. It is the biggest natural gas exporter and the second largest supplier of crude. With the prices of hydrocarbons shooting through the roof, the Government decided it would be more profitable to set aside more coal, oil, and gas for export and for processing in the petrochemical industry, and scale down their use in electricity generation. The new shift to nuclear power comes after 20 years of stalemate in the sector as Russia tried to overcome the shock of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Nuclear power today accounts for 16 per cent of the country's electricity generation, and the Kremlin has set a target to raise its share to one-quarter by 2030.

The Times of India, 29 July 2006

Bush seconds Prime Minister's concern on nuclear deal

NEW DELHI: Amid the clamour against the India-US nuclear deal on both sides of the Atlantic, two men - George Bush and Manmohan Singh - are singing from the same sheet of music. A day after Manmohan Singh articulated in Parliament his concerns regarding the US legislation, Bush, in a statement to the House of Representatives, also detailed a series of "concerns" about the legislation (HR 5682) that mirrors Singh. In a statement, the White House Office of Management and Budget has seconded two key Indian objections to the House legislation - first, India should not be asked to cap its fissile material production as a precondition to nuclear cooperation with the US, and second, nuclear cooperation with India had to be delinked from India's policy on Iran. The Bush statement comes as a big booster to Manmohan Singh who has been battling the Left, opposition BJP and dissidents like Natwar Singh on a parliamentary resolution laying out parameters on the nuclear deal. The compromise formula being hammered out between the parties may involve a PM statement in Parliament next week that takes on board the concerns of the Left without having to resort to a resolution.

The Times of India, 29 July 2006

Nuclear bridge

A computer virus attaches itself to the body of a foreign object and causes it to self-destruct. That's one way of looking at "killer amendments" tacked on by opponents of the Indo-US nuclear pact in US Congress, who know they don't have the numbers to defeat the Bill approving the pact. It's heartening that such amendments, that would have deviated from the July 18 agreement inked by New Delhi and therefore "shifted the goalposts" as Indian deal-bashers like to say, were rejected by the House of Representatives. The Bill itself was passed by a 359-68 margin. The rejected amendments included clauses that sought to place limits on India's strategic capabilities, as well as one that would make nuclear cooperation conditional on active participation in US efforts to check Iran. The margin of victory is also impressive, and indicates bipartisan support for India in the US. However, there are many hurdles still to go, including a Senate vote possibly in September, a committee that will hammer out any discrepancies between House and Senate Bills, and approval by the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

The Washington Post, 29 July 2006

House Voted on Indian Deal Unaware of Iran Missile Sales

The Bush administration will impose sanctions on two Indian firms for selling missile parts to Iran, government officials said yesterday, acknowledging privately that the secret decision should have been shared with the House before it voted this week to support U.S. plans to sell nuclear technology to New Delhi. It is not the first time Indian companies have been sanctioned for supplying Iran's suspected weapons programs. But the timing of the sanctions, which were not revealed before the vote and are being imposed during fighting between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militia, elicited angry responses from Democrats and arms-control experts yesterday. Bush administration officials have said that Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon are using Iranian-made rockets against Israeli civilians, leading some Democrats to question whether Indian companies may be involved in manufacturing the

rockets. Under the Iran-Syria Nonproliferation Act, the president is required to report to Congress periodically. The July 1 report is overdue, according to administration officials, because the State Department staff is backed up. The report identifies illicit weapons suppliers to both countries. Officials declined to identify the two companies in India selling to Iran but said both worked with missile-related technologies.

The New York Times, 29 July 2006

U.N. Moves Toward Vote on Iran's Atom Program

UNITED NATIONS, July 28: The five permanent members of the Security Council reached agreement Friday on a resolution demanding that Iran suspend nuclear enrichment and reprocessing work by the end of August or face the possibility of sanctions. The resolution, which is expected to go to a vote in the 15-member Council next week, requests 'full and sustained suspension' of nuclear activities by Aug. 31 and calls on all countries to prevent the shipment to Iran of any materials that could be used in its enrichment-related activities or ballistic missile programs. The resolution was weaker than earlier draft versions, which made the imposition of sanctions a more direct consequence of noncompliance by Tehran. The final text, worked out after objections from Russia and China, cites an article of the United Nations Charter that calls for 'further decisions' before any punishment. The sanctions would be economic and diplomatic measures, not military force. The conclusion left the proposed resolution open to differing interpretations that satisfied the objectives of rival members of the Security Council.

Dawn, 29 July 2006

India losing out on N-deal

In principle I am against the bomb. When India exploded it, I paraded on the streets of Delhi, along with 5,000 people, to register my protest. On Pakistan following suit, I met the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad to express my horror. He defended himself by pointing out that he would not have exploded the bomb if Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had not done so. Probably so. India's own stand has changed in the last four decades. Mahatma Gandhi was firmly opposed to the bomb. So was Jawaharlal Nehru. In his fortnightly letter to state chief ministers, Nehru said that he was against all nuclear arms tests, overground or underground. In a preface to a book by D.S. Kothari, a scientist, Nehru criticised nuclear weapons and the havoc they could cause. Still, the Congress government went ahead to produce the bomb while the BJP-led coalition exploded it. What has revived the debate on its use or control after several years is the Indo-US nuclear agreement which is taking the shape of a law. I wish we had been leading a movement on nuclear disarmament the world over. But we have got stuck in a bilateral agreement with America. The treaty is appearing more and more unequal as it is unfolding itself.

The News, 29 July 2006

US House vote

The overwhelming vote in the US House of Representatives ratifying the India-US nuclear deal is a reflection of America's blatant double standards. Also, it will not help much as far as reducing South Asia's growing militarisation is concerned and could well fuel another arms war between India and Pakistan. The July 26 vote was followed the next day by an announcement by a handful of Congressmen to launch an attempt to block the sale of F-16 fighter aircrafts to Pakistan. These happenings show the mood in the US Congress vis-a-vis Pakistan and India and the double standards being employed. The latter is a perception shared not just by those in Pakistan but by many in other countries. That a country which seeks to bring the rest of the world into the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty should give such preferential treatment to one which has not ever signed the treaty is a bit hard to stomach for those who use reason to think.

The Hindu, 30 July 2006

Nuclear deal: Bush administration to work with Congress, to address concerns

The Administration strongly supports House passage of H.R. 5682, the United States and India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act of 2006, and appreciates the House International Relations Committee's endorsement of this historic initiative. The legislation will facilitate nuclear energy cooperation between the world's two largest democracies. It is part of a profound transformation in the way the United States and India are partnering to promote energy security, prosperity, democracy, stability, and peace in the region and around the world. The Administration is pleased that the bill grants the President authorities related to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, consistent with the Joint Statement of President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Singh in July 2005. An important feature of this legislation is the procedure for a joint resolution of approval that ensures an up-or-down vote without amendment on a proposed nuclear energy cooperation agreement with India.

The Tribune, 30 July 2006

Resolution on Iran introduced in Security Council

United Nations, July 29: After almost two weeks of intensive negotiations, France has introduced a resolution in the 15-member UN Security Council demanding Iran suspend its uranium enrichment programme by August 31 or face possible economic and political sanctions. The draft, which is mandatory, could be voted on as early as Monday and members are expected to propose any amendments they would like to be incorporated before that. But French Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabiere, this month's Council President who formally introduced the resolution yesterday, expressed the hope that there would be no amendments. Diplomats said his hope is based on the fact that the draft had emerged after days of intensive consultations among the diplomats in UN and top officials in the capitals of five permanent veto-wielding members -- the US, China, Russia, France and Britain. The draft, a weakened version of the original American document, does not threaten to impose sanctions automatically or immediately, as the US would have liked the resolution to say, if Iran fails to comply with the Council demand. The US agreed to water down the draft to win the support of Russia and China and now Council would need to have fresh discussions on the action to be taken if Tehran defies the resolution.

The Tribune, 30 July 2006

Release report on Indian firms helping Iran: Congressman

Washington, July 29: Amidst reports that the US has imposed sanctions on two Indian firms for allegedly helping Iran's missile programme, a senior lawmaker, who is opposed to the nuclear deal with India, has demanded release of a State Department report detailing the curbs. The administration earlier this week decided to impose sanctions on the two Indian entities, which have not been named so far, for the missile-related transactions with Iran, according to a media report. These were in addition to at least eight non-proliferation sanctions the US has filed against at least seven Indian companies or persons, including two sanctions in December 2005. A query about the same left with Eugene Cottilli, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs in the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce, remained unanswered. In a statement, Congressman Ed Markey, the Democrat from Massachusetts, alleged that the sanctioning of the two firms indicated that India was unable to fully police "bad actors" in its jurisdiction from helping Iran.

The Indian Express, 30 July 2006

UN sets nuke deadline for Iran

UNITED NATIONS, JULY 29: After almost two weeks of intensive negotiations, France has introduced a resolution in the 15-member UN Security Council demanding Iran suspend its uranium enrichment programme by August 31 or face possible economic and political sanctions. Iranian state radio said later in the day that the government would reject the proposed resolution. "Iranians will not accept unfair decisions, even in the framework of resolutions by the international bodies," the commentary on state-run radio said. There has been no official comment to the draft resolution, but state radio often is thought to provide the Iranian government line. The draft, which is mandatory, could be voted on as early as Monday and members are expected to propose any amendments they would like to be incorporated before that. But French Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabiere, this month's UNSC president who formally introduced the resolution yesterday, expressed the hope that there would be no amendments. The five permanent veto-wielding members are sending the draft to their capitals and should any major amendment be proposed, the adoption could be delayed, UNSC diplomats said.

The Washington Post, 30 July 2006

The Secretive Fight Against Bioterror

On the grounds of a military base an hour's drive from the capital, the Bush administration is building a massive biodefense laboratory unlike any seen since biological weapons were banned 34 years ago. The heart of the lab is a cluster of sealed chambers built to contain the world's deadliest bacteria and viruses. There, scientists will spend their days simulating the unthinkable: bioterrorism attacks in the form of lethal anthrax spores rendered as wispy powders that can drift for miles on a summer breeze, or common viruses turned into deadly superbugs that ordinary drugs and vaccines cannot stop. The work at this new lab, at Fort Detrick, Md., could someday save thousands of lives -- or, some fear, create new risks and place the United States in violation of international treaties. In either case, much of what transpires at the National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center (NBACC) may never be publicly known, because the Bush administration intends to operate the facility largely in secret. In an unusual arrangement, the building itself will be classified as highly restricted space, from the reception desk to the lab benches to the cages where animals are kept. Few federal facilities, including nuclear labs, operate with such stealth. It is this opacity that some arms-control experts say has become a defining characteristic of U.S. biodefense

policy as carried out by the Department of Homeland Security, NBACC's creator.

The Japan Times, 30 July 2006

N. Korea missile didn't go as far as Japan estimated

The United States has told Japan that the Taepodong-2 missile fired July 5 by North Korea exploded in midair within 1.5 km of the launchpad, not 400 to 600 km away as the Japanese government had initially estimated, sources said Saturday. Japan had earlier estimated the missile reached well into the Sea of Japan. According to the sources, U.S. satellite information suggests the Taepodong-2 exploded in midair above a northeastern region of North Korea or over its territorial waters on the rim of the Sea of Japan about 40 seconds after being fired at 4:59 a.m. The debris fell almost vertically, the satellite telemetry suggested. The Taepodong-2 missile, estimated as potentially being able to reach as far as parts of the U.S. state of Alaska, was among seven rockets North Korea launched that day. A U.S. satellite spotted objects purported to be debris from the missile, but details such as what caused the explosion remain unknown, according to the sources. The Defense Agency earlier estimated, based on information including data from the United States, that the missile exploded in midair roughly 10 minute after launch, 400 to 600 km down range from the Musudanri missile base in North Hamgyong Province.

Daily Times, 30 July 2006

Pakistan says nuclear site 'safe in our hands'

KUALA LUMPUR: Foreign Minister Khurshid Ahmad Kasuri said on Friday that a powerful new nuclear reactor under construction was 'safe in our hands' and would not spark an arms race with rival India. 'It's nothing new, the world knows about it, the world knows that it's safe in our hands,' Kasuri told AFP in an interview late Friday at a meeting of Asia's top security forum in Kuala Lumpur. 'It's five years old, it's nearing completion now, I don't know the timing,' he added. The United States has urged Islamabad not to use the reactor at the Khushab nuclear complex to bolster its atomic weapons capability. International observers reacted with alarm after the Washington Post on Monday reported the reactor's existence, citing the US-based International Institute for Science and International Security. The group that said satellite photographs showed the heavy water reactor could produce more than 200 kilogrammes of weapons-grade plutonium a year - enough to make 40-50 nuclear weapons every year.

The Asian Age, 31 July 2006

Parliament must exercise its responsibility

The US-India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act of 2006 (HR 5682 RH) was passed by the House of Representatives of the US Congress on July 26, 2006. A total of 219 Republican Congressmen, out of the total 231, and 140 Democratic Congressmen, out of the total 201, voted in favour of this legislation. The US House has taken full cognisance of the cautions and protests it received from the US non-proliferation lobby, and has appropriately modified the earlier version of this Bill (HR 4974) to assuage the apprehensions. Thus, the overwhelming support this Bill received last week in the full House is only an indication that US requirements have been fully met, while we should also accept it as a strong blow dealt to India's national interests. In connection with the legislation passed on July 26, some in the Indian media have gone overboard in their enthusiasm to proclaim that a few "killer amendments," which could otherwise have been "deal-breakers" have been defeated in the process. This spreads the false and comfortable feeling that the legislation as it stands today is benign to India, and all the negative clauses which the Indian critics of the deal have worried about have been eliminated.

The Tribune, 31 July 2006

Left wants Parliament to set yardsticks on specifics on N-deal

New Delhi, July 30: The Left has toughened their stand on the Indo-US nuclear deal, by demanding Parliament discuss " threadbare the Bill passed by US Congress and those pending before the Senate, set 'parameters' to the issues of concern and demanded this be done in monsoon session itself. Mere statement or an assurance that the country would not compromise in a manner which is not consistent with the July 18 joint statement is not acceptable to us, the CPM general secretary told The Tribune. We have to discuss the (nuclear) deal point by point and Parliament should be set for the government to act," he said. There are several clauses in the US and the India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act of 2006 passed by the US House of Representatives, which are not acceptable to us and they go beyond what was accepted between Washington and New Delhi in the joint statement and the assurance given by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Parliament. He said there were nine major areas of differences where the government had to come out explicitly and could not shy away by stating that they were non-obligatory clauses, as there had been instances in the past where the US Congress had forced their President to comply those and such clauses had been used to arms twist in negotiation in other areas.

The Tribune, 31 July 2006

Coping with terror

As it is, nuclear installations and other security buildings are the obvious targets for the terrorists. But when the National Security Adviser of the country says that there is a 'very serious threat' that the Lashkar-e-Toiyaba may be planning a 'major assault' on them, it is obvious that big mischief may very much be afoot. We live in times when there are enough renegade groups raring to cause mayhem and disorder. The damage cannot be wished away. What matters is whether the nation is prepared to neutralise the threat posed by those groups. Unfortunately, the experience so far does not evoke great confidence. The way two young women and a man casually made their way into the Prime Minister's residence past the high security cordon should cause alarm. While they might have been just innocent pranksters (although even that claim may or may not be true), what would have happened if a few terrorists along with a few girls riding a fancy car had sneaked past the Z-category security in exactly the same manner? Apparently, something is badly amiss that is now engaging the attention of the security chiefs.

The Washington Post, 31 July 2006

The Next Steps With Iran

The world's attention is focused on the fighting in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, but the context leads inevitably back to Iran. Unfortunately, the diplomacy dealing with that issue is constantly outstripped by events. While explosives are raining on Lebanese and Israeli towns and Israel reclaims portions of Gaza, the proposal to Iran in May by the so-called Six (the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China) for negotiations on its nuclear weapons program still awaits an answer. It's possible that Tehran reads the almost pleading tone of some communications addressed to it as a sign of weakness and irresolution. Or perhaps the violence in Lebanon has produced second thoughts among the mullahs about the risks of courting and triggering crisis. However the tea leaves are read, the current Near Eastern upheaval could become a turning point. Iran may come to appreciate the law of unintended consequences. For their part, the Six can no longer avoid dealing with the twin challenges that Iran poses. On the one hand, the quest for nuclear weapons represents Iran's reach for modernity via the power symbol of the modern state; at the same time, this claim is put forward by a fervent kind of religious extremism that has kept the Muslim Middle East unmodernized for centuries. This conundrum can be solved without conflict only if Iran adopts a modernism consistent with international order and a view of Islam compatible with peaceful coexistence.

The Indian Express, 31 July 2006

'Nuke incentives dead if UN passes resolution'

TEHRAN, July 30: Iran said on Sunday it would stop considering international incentives aimed at ending its uranium enrichment programme if the UN Security Council passes a resolution against its atomic work. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi also warned a resolution against Iran would create what he called a deeper crisis in the Middle East, but he declined to be more specific. "If they issue a resolution against Iran, the package will no longer be on our agenda," he told a news conference. "Such a resolution would definitely not help solve regional issues and would create a deeper crisis in the region," he said. The United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and Germany approved a package of commercial and technical incentives aimed at getting Tehran to stop making nuclear fuel, which the West fears will be used in nuclear bombs. But Iran, which insists it is enriching uranium only for use in power stations, gave itself until August 22 to reply. Western powers deemed this too long and hastened moves to haul Tehran before the United Nations Security Council.

The Washington Post, 31 July 2006

The Secretive Fight Against Bioterror

On the grounds of a military base an hour's drive from the capital, the Bush administration is building a massive biodefense laboratory unlike any seen since biological weapons were banned 34 years ago. The heart of the lab is a cluster of sealed chambers built to contain the world's deadliest bacteria and viruses. There, scientists will spend their days simulating the unthinkable: bioterrorism attacks in the form of lethal anthrax spores rendered as wispy powders that can drift for miles on a summer breeze, or common viruses turned into deadly superbugs that ordinary drugs and vaccines cannot stop. The work at this new lab, at Fort Detrick, Md., could someday save thousands of lives -- or, some fear, create new risks and place the United States in violation of international treaties. In either case, much of what transpires at the National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center (NBACC) may never be publicly known, because the Bush administration intends to operate the facility largely in secret. In an unusual arrangement, the building itself will be classified as highly restricted space, from the reception desk to the

lab benches to the cages where animals are kept. Few federal facilities, including nuclear labs, operate with such stealth. It is this opacity that some arms-control experts say has become a defining characteristic of U.S. biodefense policy as carried out by the Department of Homeland Security, NBACC's creator.

The Washington Post, 31 July 2006

Custom-Built Pathogens Raise Bioterror Fears

STONY BROOK, N.Y.: In 2002, the German-born molecular geneticist startled the scientific world by creating the first live, fully artificial virus in the lab. It was a variation of the bug that causes polio, yet different from any virus known to nature. And Wimmer built it from scratch. The virus was made wholly from nonliving parts, using equipment and chemicals on hand in Wimmer's small laboratory at the State University of New York here on Long Island. The most crucial part, the genetic code, was picked up for free on the Internet. Hundreds of tiny bits of viral DNA were purchased online, with final assembly in the lab. Wimmer intended to sound a warning, to show that science had crossed a threshold into an era in which genetically altered and made-from-scratch germ weapons were feasible. But in the four years since, other scientists have made advances faster than Wimmer imagined possible. Government officials, and scientists such as Wimmer, are only beginning to grasp the implications. "The future," he said, "has already come." Five years ago, deadly anthrax attacks forced Americans to confront the suddenly real prospect of bioterrorism. Since then the Bush administration has poured billions of dollars into building a defensive wall of drugs, vaccines and special sensors that can detect dangerous pathogens. But already, technology is hurtling past it. While government scientists press their search for new drugs for old foes such as classic anthrax, a revolution in biology has ushered in an age of engineered microbes and novel ways to make them.